



*The Hour Glass*

Ever as host or a lit strain of song,  
up there turned to life the arms  
and there a hand was shown  
with a glass of wine. Under the  
glass was seen the king  
of the moonlight, with the stars  
day broken, as a solemn shade.

THE  
“THREE CASTLES”  
CIGARETTES  
20 for 3/10  
MANUFACTURED BY W. D. & H. O. WILLS

Branch of The Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain & Ireland), Ltd

TT226A

WANTED

CHILDREN'S FROM  
ENCYCLOPAEDIA RITUAL TO ROMANCE  
(10 Vols.) by JESSIE L. WESTON  
MODERN BOOKS, SETS, etc.  
HIGH PRICES PAID

ROBERT CHRIS, 8 Cecil Court, LONDON, W.C.2  
TEMPLE BAR 6700

TO KEEP ABREAST WITH TO-DAY'S BOOKS, COME TO  
**B LONDON'S BRIGHTEST BOOKSHOP**

You can **ALWAYS** see them in profusion here.  
BOOKS. **Messengers of Goodwill !!**

Exclusive Notepapers; Engravers, Diestamper, and Printers;  
Visiting and Invitation Cards for Official and Professional use  
engraved promptly and accurately.

**S TRUSLOVE & HANSON**  
14a CLIFFORD STREET (New Bond Street), W.1.

# LIFE AND LETTERS

---

*continuing The London Mercury*  
*edited by Robert Herring*

---

Vol. 61

## CONTENTS

No. 140

EDITORIAL

page 1

ARTICLES

CONTEMPORARY IRISH WRITING, *by Robert Greacen* 6  
JOYCE'S TOWER, *by Patricia Hutchins* 10  
IRISH DRAMA KNOCKS AT THE DOOR, *by R. M. Fox* 16

PLAY

STRANGE BIRTH, *by Teresa Deevy* 22  
CHAPTER FROM A NOVEL  
EBB AND FLOW, *by Michael McLaverty* 31

POETRY

ULYSSES HIS SON, *by Ewart Milne* 42  
NEITHER HERE NOR THERE, *by W. R. Rodgers* 43  
THE STARS STAND UP IN THE SKY (translation)  
    *by David Marcus* 44  
ISLE DE ST. OUEN, *by Blanaid Salkeld* 44  
RETURN TO THE CITY, *by Sam Harrison* 45  
THE BLIND MONTH, *by Robert Greacen* 46  
DERRIAGHY, *by Roy McFadden* 46  
SHADOW, *by Séan Jennett* 48  
POEM, *by Valentin Iremonger* 49

STORIES

AN EVENING'S RECREATION, *by Michael O'Beirne* 50  
THE PENSION, *by John D. Stewart* 55  
THE RED ORCHARD, *by Michael Lucey* 61  
THE GUARDIAN, *by John Hewitt* 66  
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS 73

REVIEWS OF BOOKS, *by Robert Greacen, Jack Lindsay,*  
*Roy McFadden, Henry McCrea, R. H.* 76

*Typography by Séan Jennett*

*American Correspondent: Norman Holmes Pearson*



# Don Quixote

RICHARD STRAUSS

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC

ORCHESTRA

Conductor

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM

DB 6796-800

## April Records

### JOEL BERGLUND

With Orchestra cond. by Leo Blech  
Die Frist ist um! (from "Der  
Fliegende Holländer") — Wagner

DB 6378

### HEIFETZ

Accompanied by Emanuel Bay  
Garden Scene — Korngold; Banjo  
and Fiddle — Kroll — DB 6878

### MARJORIE THOMAS

With the Philharmonia Orchestra  
Hear my prayer, O Lord; Turn  
Thee to Me (from 'Biblical Songs')  
— Dvořák — — — B 9746

### SOLOMON

Sonata in C Major — Beethoven  
C 3847-9

### BERNAC & POULENC

Le Soir; Les Berceaux — both by  
Fauré — - - - DA 1907

### TAGLIAVINI

With Orch. cond. Jean Paul Morel  
(By permission of C.E.T.R.A.)  
En fermant les yeux (from  
"Manon") — Massenet; Pourquoi  
me réveiller? (from "Werther")  
— Massenet — - - DB 6854

**"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"**



THE GRAMOPHONE COMPANY LIMITED, HAYES MIDDLESEX

*The Hallmark of Quality*

## EDITORIAL

---

*April, 1949*

NEW YORK, when the snow cleared away, took on a visibly greener tinge. That was due, not to the advent of spring, but to the approach of St Patrick's Day. Emerald favour, flowered on Fifth Avenue might remind others of Ireland in spirit, but they bore in on me that I was still far away from the Irish number in fact. Nor was I any nearer, ironically enough, when, instead of flying direct to London, we landed unexpectedly in Ireland, a country which I had not previously entered.

Headwinds, those concomitants of my Atlantic air-travel, had caused us to be five hours late coming back. This was confusing because we should, so to speak, have 'gained' five; at least in the sense of putting forward our watches, as we stepped out at Shannon to re-fuel, and I wasn't sure if I were 'up' ten on Time or merely level, which is worse than being 'down'.

Sympathetic to this, 'will you have lunch or breakfast?' said the waiter, for he knew that though it might be time for the one to them, there was still time for the other to us, we having flown with one of those occasional inconsiderate air-stewardesses you meet, whose aim is to save themselves trouble 'Anything you like, so long as you, too, don't starve us,' I said, and he replied, 'Sure, for that I can leave to your government to do,' handing me three bacon-and-eggs the while, as the picturesque phrase is. How true were his words, for though it was perhaps through only indirect governmental action, when we night-flying or having-night-flown passengers reached London air terminal, lunch was 'off' and tea, that stand-by of the English and anticipation of the visitor, was not yet 'on'. We had lost not only time on the trip, but the meals that went with it—meals never to be regained until one flies in reverse direction again and has three breakfasts en route, as the clocks are put back. I minded most the missed meals, for though five hours had been lost, they had, too, been gained. I had been fretting that, had I got in before noon, I could have

## EDITORIAL

posted this Editorial that evening; but on the other hand the period when we, going through space at, say, two hundred or more miles an hour, had for some hours stood still and only the clock hands gone forward—that had been extra to me. It had let me spend that much longer with the book which had been the single volume I had taken with me on my travels—*One Thousand Years of Irish Poets*.

Fretting, as I say, if not itching, to get down to my Editorial (earth, as no doubt, many readers will say, with a bump) I naturally noticed in it what I wished but had not wanted till then—something which made an Editorial nearly unnecessary:—

‘an anthology cannot take the place of a whole literature; it has a pioneering function, in reviving the work of forgotten writers and in keeping fine work current. If I have only a few poems of Yeats, Stephens, AE or Joyce, and a dozen of some unknowns I do not necessarily imply that the unknowns are greater poets.’

Substitute ‘magazine’ for ‘anthology’ and write ‘draw attention to unfamiliar authors’ in place of ‘reviving the work’ and there is the gist of this my introduction to our first Irish number.

Several times lately I have been asked why I did not give an issue of *Life and Letters* to Irish writers. This number is the answer, and I am indebted to Mr. Robert Greacen for his help in the collection of material. Myself need merely say that, as with other special issues, no claim is made to comprehensiveness; we can only attempt to be tolerably representative—and that within limits. One of these limits is length. It debars us not only from including certain kinds of prose or poetry, but also from considering those writers whose medium or method does not permit them to ‘tailor’ their work to samples suitable simultaneously to their style and our size.

I say this, myself at some length, because one does what one can to give space. Readers may not realize it, but reviewers should, and one weekly, commenting enthusiastically on our Chinese number, found that it was ‘marred only by the brevity of the contributions’ (one scene from a play filled thirty pages, and one story, among five, ran to four thousand words), and regretted that though Mr. Joseph Kalmer’s essay was interest-

#### EDITORIAL

ing, 'a fuller analysis of the trends in Chinese writing would have been welcome'. This is to blame a signpost for not being a map, and it is only fair to Mr. Kalmer to say that he wrote to a space dictated not by the subject but by me, the sponsor, who alone knew how little space he could have and was gratified both by his compression and his grace in accepting it. A magazine, in covering a country, can only give samples, set in place by a survey, and samples must be short, in order that as many different kinds of work as possible may be seen.

Even so, omissions are inevitable. More even than Welsh or Scottish, Irish literature suffers from the fact that, since the eighteenth century, successful writers using the English tongue have been taken over by the English. It may seem unfair, but it is so. Something has been done of late to redress the balance (both Kate O'Brien and Elizabeth Bowen are accepted as primarily Irish), and it might be argued that we ourselves might have done more. We might also have done less, and drawn on those who had already won acclaim outside the country of which Monk Gibbon writes so well in his *Dispossessed Poet*. But it seems better to put the accent, since accent there must be, on drawing attention to the as yet lesser-known—at risk of seeming to ignore the illustrious. To lay stress on both would demand an anthology and that, at least as regards poetry, there already is—the volume which for the past three months has been my constant companion. I understand that its editor, Kathleen Hoagland, is already at work on a companion one of prose.

I would not say that all her judgments bend me to her as readily as the excerpt I quoted, nor does the manner of her style give me pleasure. But an anthologist is not bound to be a writer, and a collector, particularly on ground that covers a thousand years, is not necessarily a critic, whose main function, if only subconsciously, is to select. Mrs. Hoagland seems to me insufficiently unwilling to discard, both in her estimates of contemporary poets and in the translations of early ones. At the same time, give her credit for often offering alternative translations, and remember that, in her introduction, she is writing primarily for the unconverted.

These will gain immeasurably from such dicta as that the

*File*, or official poet, had the right 'to fill the highest post in the kingdom after the king', that 'Irish monks established the monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland,' that 'it must be remembered that the home of the Icelandic sagas was the south-western portion,' to a great extent peopled by Ireland in the ninth century. Of more interest to the already literate are her selections. They begin with two of the three pieces ascribed to Amergin, one of the four brother-princes reputed to have colonized Ireland, and Torna, the last great pagan bard. There follow early Christian poems, including St. Patrick's *Deer's Cry* and the moving anonymous ninth century *Summer is Gone* which I quote in full:—

'My tidings for you; the stag bells,  
Winter snows, summer is gone.'

Wind high and cold, low the sun.  
Short his course, sea running high.'

Deep-red the bracken, its shape all gone.  
Th<sup>h</sup> wild goose has raised his wonted cry.'

Cold has caught the ings of birds.  
Season of ice—these are my tidings.'

I would cite also the last two verses of the tenth century Old *Woman of Beare*:—

O happy the isle of the great sea  
Which the flood reaches after the ebb!  
As for me, I do not expect  
Flood after ebb to come to me.  
There is scarce a little place to-day  
That I can recognize.  
What was on flood  
is all on ebb.'

There is no need for me to point the continuity of this line of thought down to not only Yeats but such a comparative minor as Gerald Griffin, in his *Gone, Gone, Forever Gone*—which was written in that most trying of recent times, 1808-1840, for poetry to be written.

#### EDITORIAL

'Life! What a cheat art thou!  
On youthful fancy stealing!  
A prodigal in promise now:  
A miser in fulfilling.'

The voice, the same voice, of suffering made vocal, of sinew refusing to snap, comes down the ages well enough, and the other side of it is given, surprisingly it may be to some, in a poem attributed to St. Brigid. I give Séan O'Faolain's version

'I would like a great lake of beer  
for the King of Kings.  
I would like to be watching Heaven's family  
drinking it through all eternity.'

For the rest, as much as I can state here, both *The Land of Cockaigne* and *The Midnight Court* are given in full; the first section, down to the sixteenth century, consists of 135 pages; there follow a batch of anonymous street ballads and then poems in Irish from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. Lastly, a section of 460 pages of Irish poets writing in English during the last six centuries. *One Thousand Years of Irish Poetry* was published in 1946 by the Devin-Adair Company in New York, and it is distributed here by the Falcon Press, at twenty-five shillings; a price which bears no proportion to its worth.

# CONTEMPORARY IRISH WRITING

An Introductory Note

---

## ROBERT GREACEN

FOR twenty-five years the consolidation of Irish independence has been reflected in the social scene. The Anglo-Irish, with an orientation towards England—‘West Britons’—have practically withered away, being replaced in power by industrialists, professional and middle classes, almost entirely Roman Catholic and ‘Irish’ in outlook. Yet the peasant influence is strongly felt. As Sean O’Faolain says :—

... in trying to impose a peasant life-way on the towns we try to exclude anything which the peasant (especially the Catholic peasant) does not understand. Literature is, naturally, one of those things which the peasant looks upon with the greatest suspicion. . . . He thinks himself safe behind formal religion, formal censorships, and an emotional Nationalism that is, at least, a quarter of a century out of date.

Thus there is a developing bourgeoisie—for lack of a better word—which assumes that literature and art of a mild, reassuring kind, may be had in any book or print shop for so much cash down.

This brings its usual reaction; the protest of those surrounded by such values but unwilling to accept them. The principal writers of the bleak years—some might term them ‘expansionist’—that have followed on a time of revolutionary idealism are fairly well-known outside their own country: among others, Frank O’Connor, Sean O’Faolain, and, of course, O’Casey. Apart from intrinsic and essentially individual qualities one sees behind the poetry to the social *malaise*, to their feeling that after all the proud, intoxicated words, revolution has turned out a pretty damp squib. Rebellion has indeed, as one critic recently put it, ‘become a praiseworthy but concluded activity’, while book censorship remains a depressing reality.

Writers of the generation immediately following have not been disillusioned in quite the same way: for them, the struggles of Black-and-Tan and Civil War phases appear a little overworked. Such writers as Mary Lavin or Kate O'Brien have used the smaller town, the personal incident, and Patrick Kavanagh describes the stone-walled farm of County Monaghan. Another important writer, the playwright Teresa Deevy, whose background is Waterford, has only recently had much recognition outside the B.B.C.; her work has also been televised.

As an undercrop to those with several volumes behind them are a number of short story writers—Bryan MacMahon, Domhall O'Conaill and Michael O'Beirne. It is possible that O'Beirne may develop into a writer of importance. His stories are instinct with a gentleness—and yet a certain lyrical irony, a sharpness even—that owes much to the Chekov tradition, already followed by O'Faolain, reversing that tendency in some Irish writers to exploit for their own sake violence of situation and character. Comparative newcomers are John D. Stewart, a radio feature writer, and Michael Lucey, who has already achieved a pleasing crispness of dialogue.

Michael McLaverty and John Hewitt are Ulstermen—indeed the Northern province has produced an exceedingly high proportion of younger writers—whose work is strikingly 'regional' in appeal. Primarily a short story writer, McLaverty has published several novels characterized by freshness of vision, exactness of natural descriptions and a belief in the native goodness and dignity of man. Nothing escapes his attention—

Below him among a clump of nettles was an old can so eaten with rust you could have put your foot through it.

Both he and Hewitt use idiomatic speech, sometimes indirectly, so marking off in their work the peculiarly 'Ulster' contours. Hewitt is attracted by words like 'kibes', good, sound Elizabethan coinage that has disappeared from too much spoken English, and by pithy Scots words brought across the Irish Sea by seventeenth century colonists. Although he has written effective stories and a good deal of literary and art criticism, he often reveals his most personal attitude in verse:—

This then my country, not parturient,  
 but boulder-sterile, cragging harsh and bare,  
 not the round-bellied meadow indolent,  
 or the healed gashes of the loving share.  
 There is no crop or seed to know my hand.  
 No sod responds. Thought wanders spare and lean  
 across the whin and heather of my land.

The poet W. R. Rodgers, also from Ulster, now working as a script writer with the B.B.C. in London, has vitality and an original voice. Apart from the English poets of the 'thirties, his chief influence would appear to be Hopkins, which might be exceedingly dangerous and limiting for a contemporary. But Rodgers makes creative use of the influence. He, too, writes movingly of the countryside:—

Bearnagh and Lamigan and Chimney Rock,  
 Spelga, Pulgrave and Cove—all these names lie  
 Silently in my grass-grown memory,  
 Each one bright and steady as a frog's eye ;  
 But touch it and it leaps, leaps like a bead  
 Of mercury that breaks and scatters  
 Suddenly in a thousand shining strings  
 And running spools and ever-dwindling rings  
 Round the mind's bowl, till at last all drop  
 Lumped and leaden again to one full stop.

Like so many of the others, Rodgers often seems happiest when speaking of the country; for in Belfast—his home town—the one big industrial centre in Ireland, one is never more than a relatively short tram-ride from the open fields. And, in any case, hardly any townsmen fail to have a link with the country through father or grandfather. Yet Rodgers has contributed generously to the poetry of urban civilization—the cinema, the daily newspaper, the stereotyped clerk, the relations of lovers—supply him with themes for an attitude skilfully balanced between the caustic and the sympathetic. The growing school of Ulster regionalism has attracted writers such as Roy McFadden whose poetry contains a more direct emotion than that of Rodgers, more colour, more melody. Haunted by the evil of our time, conscious of the 'futility of War, he tends to despair of man's teachability.

ROBERT GREACEN

Among the handful of women poets in Ireland, Blanaid Salkeld is prominent for her delicate finish, her spirit of 'modernity'. Then, among the expatriates, two contrasting poets in Ewart Milne and Seán Jennett have each published several volumes in England. Young poets still working at home include David Marcus, Valentin Iremonger, Donagh MacDonagh and—until quite recently—Sam Harrison. Various anthologies, including *New Irish Poets*, brought out in 1948 in New York, show the surprising diversity of theme and technique in Irish poetry to-day.

The majority of Irishmen are excellent talkers, opinion-mongers ; which may be why so many good ideas dissipate themselves in public-houses, being thus lost to the cool permanence of magazine and book. Literary criticism demands a discipline, an objectivity, a suspension of strong emotional bias—all of which are somewhat alien to the prevalent cast of mind.

On the whole, newspapers and periodicals give little space to serious criticism. M. J. MacManus, the biographer, deals with much of current literature in *The Irish Press*. Another exception is *The Irish Times*, in which Austin Clarke, poet and playwright, regularly reviews verse ; among other frequent contributors are R. M. Fox, author of several political and social studies, Donat O'Donnell and Patricia Hutchins. Poetry comment in Ireland is usually over-subjective and backward glancing to the (now) golden days of Yeats and the Abbey Theatre *milieu*, and a number of young poets find more generous appreciation in England and the U.S.A. That brave little quarterly, *Poetry Ireland*, attempts to redress the balance.

If Irish writers are less interested than those of other countries in experiment and new techniques they more than compensate in diversity and richness of material. For the poets alone, legend and myth, which have not become synthetic or falsified by over-use, are there at hand, together with those elements—good, bad and indifferent—common to most Europeans. A literature, like a nation, does not live by the vitality of its one or two acknowledged 'leaders', but by its general level of ability and awareness.

# JAMES JOYCE'S TOWER

---

PATRICIA HUTCHINS

COMING back from England, we waited for the train to move from Dun Laoghaire into Dublin. Brown photographs of Killarney lakes and side-cars at Glengarriff were framed in the carriage, with their straw-hatted, long-skirted tourists of forty years ago; under them a row of journey-tired faces, returning emigrants on holiday from British factories, a visitor or two. Outside, the water with its little green and white boats, sheltered by the stone pier opposite, was very clean and clear, polished-up looking, as it circled out from their slight rise and fall.

Above the pinky sandstone, fresh too in this eight o'clock light, was the round of the Martello Tower at Sandycove. Perhaps the photographs had the right time, and Buck Mulligan-Gogarty was turning the eggs on the frying pan, Stephen Daedalus-Joyce watching the Mail Boat from the gun-rest there.

As we travelled into Dublin, through railway walls with red and white valerian, past Blackrock and Booterstown—with its fairground which might have been 'Araby'—through the thin-sliced gardens of Sandymount, I made up my mind to get into the Martello—Joyce's tower. This perhaps was the point at which a book on his Dublin should start, for the opening of *Ulysses* is the end of one phase and the beginning of another.

The place was in a different mood on the day we went there. From the Pillar a tram for Dun Laoghaire sang and hissed its low-down and topsided protests and murmurings. Like so much in Dublin, each one has a personality to express and is known intimately to its driver, for as Bloom considered, 'Everything speaks in its own way.'

It was showery, and Howth seemed nearer than usual. Being Saturday the yachts racing in the Bay were like cabbage whites, in groups or scattered on green leaves of sea. As we

walked towards Sandycove, a few children played on the rocks which at low tide jag out from the sea wall ; demerara-sugar coloured, they are patterned like putty slashed by a knife. Near the Forty Foot bathing place, beyond the tiny inlet, a large boat was tacking, the sea turning away in wide cauliflower folds as she put about and the wind stiffened into the broad, laundered-white sails again.

The curves of a modern house repeat the theme of the Martello Tower. Shaped like the mouth of a cannon, it is one of a number built against French invasion early in the nineteenth century and the only monuments of their period to Wolfe Tone, Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Robert Emmett. Whereas rough open ground running along the cliff, surrounded the Tower at one time, this has now been walled in and a concrete road made above the sea.

Having obtained the key we went through a sheltered garden, then up a path of the same pinky, sugar-rock stone, covered with insignis pine needles. There are iron steps, rather like a fire escape, outside the tower, leading to the first-floor entrance. These are painted a naval grey like the narrow, heavy door of studded metal, with its huge keyhole.

As it swung slowly across the threshold stone I called 'Joyce, Joyce!' and then, 'Jimmy, Jim! Are you there?'

But when we entered through the narrow passage my mood became serious, as though this had been an invocation. How long since the name had been called there, since Joyce had returned with the intensity of imagination from some room in Zurich or Trieste, and with him brought so many readers to this bare-floored, egg-shaped room? One had no feeling there of a vitiated past, the memory-worn-away atmosphere of much visited places.

Two shafts running upwards aslant the thick, white-washed walls provide a certain light, and these are mentioned in *Ulysses* as being clouded by the smoke of the fire. This may have been the small rusty range with an oven and an open grate. Except for one high shelf round the room, the place was empty.

A very narrow, railless flight of stone stairs turns upwards to the roof, so that Buck Mulligan must have carried his

### JOYCE'S TOWER

shaving bowl very carefully, his yellow dressing-gown brushing against the walls. There is a raised gun-rest which circles the outer wall like a step. To the chin are the huge blocks of grey-white granite, clean and flinty, with little bits of shining quartz, as if brought straight from Kilcullen on the hills. A bunch or two of grass waves in the cracks, and all round is the view of the mountains, the sea, with the two spires of Dun Laoghaire, like eyed needles waiting to be threaded.

Impressions, ideas, seemed to hurry in on the mind; the contrast of what has become art with the ordinary-dayness of real, here-in-Dublin life, with tea at home and the six o'clock news before us, that odd coming together of circumstance and creative ability whereby a particular moment can be changed, cut out from every other, like stone from the quarry, and given form, harmony and a kind of radiance, a life longer than our own.

'Joyce has gone.' I said as we shut the tower door, seeing that plain grave in Zurich with the Irish moss Norah Joyce had found, and then parodying Joyce on Parnell. 'He's there, all that was mortal of him. Peace to his ashes.'

Dubliners, and most Irish people, are promenaders. Spend a night in a hotel front bedroom in Bantry or Sligo, or along the Dublin quays, and there will be plenty of time to analyse the social, economic and temperamental implications of this trait.

In James Joyce this was accentuated. His books are peregrinations; people are always coming or going, and Dublin landmarks are the lacepins about which the whole structure is designed. As a young man it seems that he spent hours, whole days, walking through Dublin. In *Stephen Hero*, the early draft of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Mr. Daedalus asks Stephen what the hell had brought him out one day as far as Dolphin's barn, a considerable distance from their home in Fairview at the time.

With his developing awareness of the personal past, Joyce

must have found himself on one occasion before the straight, red-brick little house in Brighton Square, Rathgar, where he was born in 1882. The hills can be seen from there, cherry trees show over garden walls, a triangle of grass with a privet hedge is given over to a model aeroplane club; all is very quiet, untrespassed looking.

The directory shows that his father, John Stanislaus Joyce, to have been in the Collector General's office, a good job with the administration of the city. Their neighbours were mostly ladies and 'esquires', with a bank official or two thrown in.

By 1885 they had moved to 23 Castlewood Avenue in the same upper middle class area, the urban district of Rathmines, not yet part of the city. John Stanislaus Joyce had dropped his distinguishing middle name and 'co.gen. office' is no longer mentioned in Thom's. 'William Osbourne, A.R.H.A., artist, animal painter, etc.' lived a few doors down, and the Joyce's immediate neighbour was Mr. Jones, Secretary of the Church of Ireland Temperance Society, hardly an acquaintance of the convivial, talkative, amusing Cork man and his pretty wife.

In three years' time, 1888, they had left this house for another untraced residence. It is not until 1891 that he is shown as being in possession of number 1 Martello Terrace, Bray. The house is still there, next to the Baths at the sea end of a short grey terrace made uniform by a continuous wooden paling in Greek key pattern running under the first floor windows. Some of the doors retain their Victorian leaded panels, and the grass around the terrace has that dry and down-trodden look of the seaside. Modest, private, they stand slightly removed from the more popular hotel and boarding house roads of that part of Bray.

According to *A Portrait*, Joyce first went to Clongowes Wood from this house and in the College chapel, thinking of the Christmas holidays to come, heard again the tide washing against the sea wall there. The family seems to have been prosperous then, with servants and heavy metal dish-covers over turkey and good food. There was a nursery for the younger children, and when the small boy in Eton jacket

### JOYCE'S TOWER

and stiff collar asked his father for sixpence, he was always given a shilling.

It was not long before the Joyces moved again, this time to Blackrock. Leoville, 23 Carysfort Avenue, where they spent something like eighteen months between 1892 and 1893, is on the right at a bend above the Protestant Church. Square, more important than the Bray house, it has good-sized rooms and between the pillars of the portico sits a rather weather-weary lion, as if watching the comings and goings of its owners. The windows have stained glass medallions and the door a man and a woman's head on its panels, guardians too of the history of the house.

Smelling of strong tobacco, Uncle Charles in *A Portrait* used to take his nephew down to shop in Blackrock, or to the park at Rock Hill, where Stephen puffed out his chest and did a little 'training' under the eye of Mike Flynn. With his father they often went for walks on Sundays through a hinterland of fairly large estates; to Goatstown, Stillorgan, Dundrum. Within their high walls the houses are partitioned or falling down now, a burnt-out ruin or two among them. A few of the old gentry hang on there. One eighteenth century mansion was owned until recently by an eccentric old man living alone. In the large reception rooms, crowded with tables and furniture, pictures and glass, everything metal had been chromium-plated. The staircase, thick with candle-grease—'like a glacier' said the man at the lodge—had to be scraped before the coffin could be carried down. For years the owner had combated the income tax authorities. His recreations, as *Who's Who* might put it: going to Dun Laoghaire Yacht Club for a morning-long bath, and taking 'mystery' bus tours.

The small, white-washed house among rose bushes on the road to the mountains, where Stephen, after reading *The Count of Monte Cristo*, imagined another Mercedes lived, has probably disappeared into a building estate or sanatorium. Yet milkmen still come from the farms with their horse-drawn carts, and small boys often accompany them. Down on the

PATRICIA HUTCHINS

shore, gangs play around the old Castle, and bathe at the small beach at Seapoint, all talking and laughing like a group of starlings, and return at night as the lights begin to shine in the comfortable houses.

If the servants at Leoville whispered together in the hall, and his father stood before the fireplace talking of his troubles, while Uncle Charles begged him to continue his meal, the small boy was only aware of food and bedtime, the next long, school-less day before him, the 'comfort and reverie' of that eternal present of childhood there.

# IRISH DRAMA KNOCKS AT THE DOOR

---

R. M. FOX

**A**t the turn of the century when Yeats and his friends began their work in the theatre in Dublin there was already a well-defined school of social criticism finding expression on the stage in Western Europe, Ibsen in Denmark, Hauptmann in Germany, Brieux in France, Shaw and Galsworthy in Britain. Drama had been freed from sawdust and tinsel by the Ibsen movement. Though the impetus of this movement reached Ireland through Yeats, he was not at all interested in social drama.

Yeats began with plays of shadowy grandeur, of legendary heroes and of peasant life. *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* was Yeats' banner play and in this he certainly touched the deep core of National feeling. In these early plays the men and women of the fields are transmuted by poetry. The poetic note persisted in Synge who made his peasants and fishermen tragic, hilarious, fantastic figures. Synge's work, in spite of its rich, strange extravagance of phrase, showed a deepening realism, especially in *Riders to the Sea*. He helped to bring Irish drama out of the Yeatsean golden mist. Now the heroic legendary plays have faded out but the peasant drama has remained.

After the first World War and Ireland's own battles, drama became increasingly critical, realistic and bitter. Sean O'Casey expressed this phase. In place of the men of the fields talking in blank verse, we had the sudden eruption of tenement humanity. But there were clear lines of continuity. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* ceded ground to those playboys of the Gloucester Diamond, Joxer Daly and Captain Boyle. It was the intense humanity of O'Casey's characters that moved his audiences and revivified the Abbey theatre. O'Casey's discovery that there were cities in Ireland as well as fields was momentous for it opened the way for the dramatic

treatment of many complex problems and showed a whole new strata of life. Irish drama followed a rugged path. T. C. Murray had written out of the Catholic tradition, giving intimate studies of Irish character as did Padraic Colum in an earlier day. Lennox Robinson—from the Protestant side—presented a dry and detached realism of the drawing room, always a little apart. On the comedy side, the work of the popular Northern dramatist, George Shiels, and of Louis D'Alton makes it clear that Irish drama is not going to take itself too seriously.

When the *Gate Theatre* emerged in 1928 it was a sign that some freer medium of expression was needed. The Abbey mould had hardened and life was taking new shapes. Micheal MacLiammoir and Hilton Edwards—two men of initiative and versatile talent—began this pioneer effort. Later they were joined by Lord Longford who subsequently broke away and formed his own dramatic group, sharing the Gate theatre during the year with Edwards-MacLiammoir. An important part of the *Gate* function was to bring the best of the Continental and American plays to Dublin. The *Gaiety* did this too but it catered more for established box office successes. Those who were privileged to see some of the early *Gate* productions know how far Dublin was in their debt for striking plays, brilliant production and acting.

Denis Johnston's *The Old Lady Says No*—with its novel Expressionist technique—was typical of the kind of play which the *Gate* alone could present with distinction. This clever play caught up all the doubts, hesitations, and weaknesses in the National outlook and wove them into a curious pattern. It did not fit the Abbey mould. Johnston's *The Moon In The Yellow River*—produced at the *Abbey*—treats of the conflict between the old romantic Ireland of the Celtic Twilight and the new Ireland of Shannon Power with its pitiless glare of reality. Another dramatist who has since achieved wider fame—Paul Vincent Carroll—managed to get through in the *Abbey* with several plays, including his fine *Shadow and Substance*, where faith and dogma are in conflict. When he began to develop along the lines of social criticism as in *The Strings are False* he found himself estranged from the *Abbey*, though Shelah

Richards produced this play with great success in Dublin. His estrangement began with *The White Steed*, an Abbey rejection that won plaudits when it appeared on Broadway. Dr. Robert Collis's *Marrowbone Lane*—a play of biting social criticism, written with the avowed intention of revealing tenement evils—proved one of the most popular and moving plays at the *Gate*, though it, too, could not fit into the famous Abbey mould.

One cannot discuss the *Gate* theatre without considering the work of Micheal MacLiammoir as dramatist. His early *Diarmuid and Gráinne*—in Irish—indicated his love of legendary Ireland. And in his subsequent plays there is a stimulating mixture of modern drawing-room cynicism and poetic legend. The step from Yeats to Wilde is not so great and MacLiammoir is a link between poetic fantasy and the world we know—not the 'mundane' world, for MacLiammoir's glowing imagination lights up life wherever he finds it. His *Where Stars Walk* and *Ill Met By Moonlight* are characteristic of his approach. More recently in *The Mountains Look Different* he showed that he is able to work on realistic lines and is not tied to fantasy. With his partner, Hilton Edwards—famed for the excellence of his productions—MacLiammoir should be able to make further significant contributions to the theatre in Ireland.

Lord Longford has brought plays by Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, Chekov and many others—including Chinese plays—to the *Gate*. His own verse translations are a unique feature. As a dramatist he is known chiefly by his *Yahoo*, a forceful study of Swift in his eighteenth century setting. Christine Longford has written many plays built round Irish historical personalities. But her *Tankardstown or A Lot to be Thankful For*, with its witty commentary on modern Ireland seen from the angle of a country hotel in which a variety of people are gathered, is her most interesting and successful play. Part of the appeal of *Tankardstown* is its modern note—so often lacking on the Irish stage—the author has created characters through which her own keen satirical observation of life is revealed.

Teresa Deevy is an Irish dramatist who should be better known. Her *Katie Roche* was an *Abbey* success. It was taken to England and America on tour. Together with two more plays

of hers this was published by Macmillan and also appeared in a Gollancz collection of plays of the year. It was broadcast in Sweden. *The King of Spain's Daughter*—a colourful play produced at the *Abbey*—is about a country girl who imagines herself in all kinds of grand, thrilling situations, as the heroine—to the disgust of her cloddish family and the neighbours, to whom the possession of imagination and a hatred of dullness seems a wicked and wilful form of lying. Teresa Deevy has a genius for creating character through dialogue. Out of odd scraps of talk we watch the characters growing. She seems particularly interested in her women who demand freedom, adventure, or romance beyond the ordinary. This is the theme of *Katie Roche*. In technique and outlook she owes much to Ibsen though she is a dramatist with her own view of life. Not long ago the Abbey Experimental Theatre produced a one-act play *Light Falling*, remarkable for the casual way in which its handful of characters came to life and significance. Teresa Deevy has written upwards of a dozen plays—all intriguing and with a shrewd sense of humour. Many of these have been written for the radio, either in Dublin or for the B.B.C. They have proved popular as radio plays. But they deserve far more of a place on the Irish stage and, in fact, on any stage where living drama is allowed to take precedence of the stale and the stuffed.

Gerard Healy is the author of two exceptionally good plays, *Thy Dear Father*—a penetrating study of a religious bigot—produced at the *Abbey*, and *The Black Stranger*, a famine play of the 1847 period, one of the most moving tragedies I have seen. This is far more than a documentary for it shows—and explains—the tenacity of the small farmers who hold on to their land at any cost. It can be recommended to English dramatic groups who want a play dealing with Irish realities instead of the usual stage Irish farce.

Another coming dramatist is Walter Macken who for some years produced, managed, and acted in the Galway Gaelic Theatre while—in his spare time—he wrote several Gaelic plays. Now he is in the *Abbey* company and his *Mungo's Mansion*—a play of Galway life—had its première there. Recently it was revived with Macken in the principal role.

#### IRISH DRAMA KNOCKS AT THE DOOR

Under the title *Galway Handicap* it was produced in London. Macken has also written *Vacant Possession*, another Galway play, which has been published in London but has not yet been staged. He is a young man of energy and insight. He does not confine his activities to the stage for he has written *Quench The Moon*, a novel of Connemara life. Familiar as he is with stage technique and with an intimate knowledge of life in the West of Ireland, he should have much of interest to say. His first play, which deals with the Galway tenement area of Butter-milk Lane, has been compared with the work of O'Casey. But it is quite different for it has the authentic Connemara tang. As with most of the moderns, his bent is towards biting realism and against moonlit romance.

M. J. Molloy is the author of *The King of Friday's Men* which has been packing the *Abbey* for some weeks. An excellent play, the situations and character drawing alike hold the audience. Fortunately for M. J. Molloy, his work fits in the *Abbey* mould. *The King of Friday's Men* is an historical play with a strong human and dramatic appeal. His earlier play, *The Old Road*, dealt in semi-comedy fashion with emigration, that familiar road which the young men and women of Ireland have followed for generations. John Coulter's *The Drums Are Out*—done at the *Abbey*—was an impressionistic study of a wild Orange night in Belfast with a tragic story woven cunningly into its texture.

While it is not possible to mention all the younger dramatists whose work showed promise in recent years there are one or two others who must be included. Mervyn Wall began well with *Alarm Among The Clerks*. This did not fit the famous *Abbey* mould so it was produced in the tiny *Peacock*. His *Lady In The Twilight* (*Abbey*) and *The Shadow* (*Olympia*) were original and interesting. Perhaps because of the small scope for dramatists in Ireland, Mervyn Wall has turned to the novel. His *The Unfortunate Fursey* has now been followed by *The Return of Fursey*. This may mean that we have lost a dramatist. Bernard McGinn will be remembered for his *Remembered For Ever*, a bitter portrayal of how the dead are honoured and the living neglected. Produced at the *Abbey* it was the target for disgruntled political abuse, in itself a tribute

R. M. FOX

to the play's stinging power. It was played in Glasgow and received considerable notice outside Ireland.

Among the new dramatists must be numbered Donagh MacDonagh, whose *Happy As Larry* delighted Dublin and conquered wider fields. His success serves to call attention to the Lyric Theatre, inspired and directed by Austin Clarke, who has written distinctive and lovely verse plays. Not only in Dublin but throughout the country there is a keen interest in the stage. When the Longford Players visited Waterford the theatre was booked out for the entire period. This also happened at Cork when the Illsley-McCabe Company were playing in the city. A publisher who specializes in issuing plays for local amateur groups tells me that the demand in the country is three times that of pre-war days.

The Irish theatre is beginning to express the complexity of modern life and thought in Ireland though the traditional approach still hampers this and imposes a time-lag. A most serious problem is the lack of opportunity for new dramatists. The *Abbey* limit for new plays is, apparently, some three or four a year. In what has come to be known as the great days of the *Abbey*, that theatre achieved world fame for its restrained, natural acting and its beautifully spoken English. Now it gives a great deal of time and attention to acting as a schoolmaster in Gaelic and, inevitably, drama has suffered. Lord Longford has little scope for outside work and the same applies to the Edwards-MacLiammoir company.

How can the younger dramatists keep their minds and their stage technique alive when they may have to wait a year or two before a new play can be produced? And this assumes that the new plays will eventually be seen, which is not at all certain. The problem of new and challenging drama in Ireland is bound up with the question of more opportunity and scope for the rising dramatists. Before we can have a new drama in line with the new problems of the modern world there must be room for more new plays on the Irish stage.

# STRANGE BIRTH

(A Play in One Act)

---

## TERESA DEEVY

*SCENE: The hall of Mrs. Taylor's house—No. 19 Mountain View Road. The hall door, which is closed, is at the left side. There is a door in the wall at the back and to the right of this door a curtained archway shows the beginning of the stairs.*

*It is a Summer morning, about 9 a.m.*

*When the curtain rises Sara Meade is working in the hall, polishing the linoleum. About thirty years of age, strongly built, somewhat ungainly of movement, she glows with happy energy, and goes at her work with heavy goodwill.*

*A postman's knock—some letters fall into the box, and from it on to the floor. Sara swoops over and seizes them. She stands for a moment close to the hall door, listening as though to make sure there is no one outside—or rather that the postman's steps are receding. Then, having carefully examined the envelopes, with a headshake over one, a smile over another, she places three of them on the hall table, and with one in hand goes to the door in the back wall. Here she hesitates, listening again, as for a movement inside. Turning from the door she leaves this letter also on the table, takes her mop, and restarts work, humming softly.*

*A moment later this door opens and a tall, grey-haired woman comes into the hall. She wears dressing-gown and bedroom slippers. . . .*

SARA: 'Well, Mrs. Taylor—out of bed so early!'

MRS. TAYLOR: 'Is there a letter?'

SARA (pounces on one of the letters, brings it to Mrs. Taylor): I was sure you were dozing or I'd bring it in.

MRS. TAYLOR: 'From my son, Sara—'

SARA: 'Ah, I was thinking . . .'

MRS. TAYLOR: 'Where are my glasses . . . my glasses? (shaking, excited).'

SARA: 'I'll get them for you' (rushes into Mrs. Taylor's room and returns with glasses). 'Now while you read it I'll put on the

kettle . . .’ (*disappears, right. Mrs. Taylor stands in the centre of the hall, reading in breathless excitement. Sara re-appears*). ‘I have it plugged in, it won’t be long.’

MRS. TAYLOR: ‘Sara, he’s coming . . . safe home again . . .’

SARA: ‘That’s the best ever.’

MRS. TAYLOR: ‘Out of all danger.’

SARA: ‘Hooray for the day! Get back to bed now, and let you be reading, and I’ll bring in the cup of tea.’

MRS. TAYLOR: ‘Back to bed! I’ll be up and about. I’m a different woman.’

SARA: ‘Good, so you are. This will be the making of you. We’ll have the place grand now. We’ll put up the new curtains.’

MRS. TAYLOR: ‘Yes—and have the blind settled.’ (*Shaky.*)

SARA: ‘We’ll be mashers. I’ll give the room a great doing. What time will he come?’

MRS. TAYLOR: ‘Sometime in the evening—that’s all he said.’

SARA: ‘Out of the draught with you, now Mrs. Taylor’ (*brings her to the door of her bed-room*).

MRS. TAYLOR: ‘You’re a good girl: I’d never have got through the winter without you: those long months when I was frightened for him . . . full of worry, and but for you would have been worse—’

SARA: ‘What did I do? Will you tell me that.’ (*Smilingly matter-of-fact.*)

MRS. TAYLOR: ‘You to talk to—so much comfort.’

SARA: ‘Mr. Bassett will be coming down for his letters—it wouldn’t do—you to be here.’ (*Gets her into her room.*) ‘That’s right now. I have the tray ready.’ (*Shuts the door, and starts again on her own work. Suddenly she stops and listens—hand to heart. The hall door is opened from outside: a young man comes in, putting his latch-key into his pocket.*)

SARA: Well, Mr. Bassett but you’re out early!

MR. BASSETT: ‘Yes, the early worm don’t you know.’

SARA: ‘I couldn’t think for my life who’d be opening the door.’

MR. BASSETT: ‘Bad for the heart, isn’t it, life and all that. Any letters?’

STRANGE BIRTH

SARA: 'Not the right one, for you, this morning.' (*Gently.*)

MR. BASSETT: 'Are these all the letters? (*with keen disappointment.*)

SARA: 'Maybe it will come by the second post.' (*Sympathy.*)

MR. BASSETT: 'No! She won't write to me now, ever again . . . Why doesn't she, Sara? . . . Can you understand it—from what I told you?'

SARA: 'What understanding could I have, an ignorant creature—?'

MR. BASSETT: 'I think you have . . . you've more than . . . some . . .' (*a silence*) . . . If she'd write—no matter what—'

SARA: 'Take it square on the jaw Mr. Bassett.'

MR. BASSETT: 'I'm not a whiner.'

SARA: 'Indeed you're not. I often thought how brave you were, when you'd be telling me all about her, and the bad times you'd be having.'

MR. BASSETT (*taking out cigarettes*): 'Will the Taylor lady mind if I loiter? . . . It's lonesome above . . .'

SARA: 'She'll mind nothing this morning; her son's coming home. Her world goes round him . . . Isn't it terrible and awful to be that way?'

MR. BASSETT: 'Will you have a fag, Sara?'

SARA: 'I couldn't smoke here.'

MR. BASSETT: 'Keep for this evening.' (*Tosses one to her, it falls on the floor. Sara picks it up eagerly and stores safely away.*) Why I was out so early this morning—my mother's wedding.'

SARA: 'Her wedding? This morning?'

MR. BASSETT: Oh, she was married before I was born, very good an' all of that. Twenty-five years ago to-day: she'd have me make it a great occasion—out for Mass—and I'm to meet my fate to-day, so she said—that's why I was hoping—' (*breaks off: glances towards letters.*)

SARA: 'You had a right to tell me all this sooner (*rallying him*). 'I'd have it broadcast up the road that you'd be out. There'd be plenty of early birds around.'

MR. BASSETT: 'All but the right one' (*with the disillusionment of twenty-five. At this moment Mrs. Stims comes through the archway. She is a small, fair, washed-out woman of forty: shabbily dressed, very tidy, wears glasses. She has come up the stairs from the garden flat.*)

TERESA DEEVY

MRS. STIMS: 'Is this what you're employed for, Sara, talking to people in the hall?' (*She appears to be inwardly fuming.*)

MR. BASSETT: 'I beg your pardon, but that's a question for Mrs. Taylor.'

MRS. STIMS: 'I beg your pardon—mind your business!'

SARA: 'There's the kettle boiling—I must make her tea!' (*She disappears.*)

MRS. STIMS: 'I suppose there are no letters for me—yes, two—but she couldn't be bothered bringing them down—no, she's too busy. Oh, she has far too much to do.'

MR. BASSETT: 'Is that part of her job—to bring down your letters?'

MRS. STIMS: 'She ought to be sent away from here—she's awkward and rough, a bossy young woman . . . somebody else would be better.'

MR. BASSETT: 'That's an idea.' (*Turns, and goes slowly up the stairs, whistling. Mrs. Stims stands at the hall table: she has opened her letters and glanced over them—now her look wanders round the hall.*)

MRS. STIMS: 'Empty . . . empty . . . as soon as I appear—nobody wants me.' (*Sara reappears, carrying a tray into Mrs. Taylor's room. Seeing her Mrs. Stims pretends to be engrossed in letters, but when Sara has gone she looks round again, then pushes up her glasses and presses her fingers against tired eyes.*)

SARA (coming): 'Is it good word for you, Mrs. Stims?'

MRS. STIMS: 'Thank you for bringing it down to me.'

SARA: 'Oh, indeed I might have done that much . . . I might have indeed. . . . Is it good now?'

MRS. STIMS: 'That's my private affair, my correspondence.'

SARA: 'But you were telling me all—you were—'

MRS. STIMS: 'I'll tell you more when I see fit. . . . A girl gone quite beyond her station.' (*Silence: Mrs. Stims goes: Sara gazes after her for a moment, then taking her mop, is about to start work again when there is a knock at the door. She springs to the door with eagerness, waits for a moment, glowing: another knock. Sara opens the door. The postman is seen: he is medium size, and at first sight may appear nondescript, but when he speaks there is a quiet forcefulness altogether out of the ordinary. He steps into the hall.*)

SARA: 'Oh, Bill-the-post, and you coming in.' (*A laugh which is almost a guffaw: her attitude towards him is one of amusement,*

STRANGE BIRTH

*unconsciously adopted perhaps, to hide a glowing excitement in his presence.)*

BILL: 'Shut the door for a minute.' (*She laughs again, shuts the door, turns to him.*)

SARA: 'And what is it this morning?'

BILL (*very serious*): 'I've a letter here for Mrs. Kirwan. Would there be a Mrs. Kirwan in this house?'

SARA: 'There is not.'

BILL: 'No, I thought not.'

SARA: 'Would it be for Mr. Bassett?'

BILL: 'Kirwan . . . Kirwan . . . number 19—that's your number.'

SARA: 'Then it must be for Mrs. Stims.' (*Determined.*)

BILL: 'Sara, don't be talking nonsense.'

SARA (*a little wildly*): 'Well, Mr. Bassett is above and Mrs. Stims is down below and Mrs. Taylor on this floor, and that's all the christian people in this house.'

BILL: 'Besides yourself.'

SARA: 'Do I live here Bill-the-post?'

BILL: 'Don't you come here daily working?'

SARA: 'Sara Meade—if you could make a Mrs. Kirwan out of that . . .' (*Silence: they look at one another.*)

BILL: 'It might be made . . . it might very well be.' (*Silence.*) 'Will I leave it here on the table till someone will claim it?'

SARA: 'And I'll mark it "not known" and throw it into the pillar beyond.'

BILL: 'What matter but there's something worth reading in that letter.'

SARA: 'How could you know?'

BILL: 'I have knowledge.'

SARA (*a little nervous*): 'Why couldn't you drop it in the box and save me the time and all this trouble?'

BILL: 'Sure I wouldn't see you, then, and how could I face the live-long day if I didn't see you in the morning?'

SARA: 'Phew-ew! A postman too—one of the Government—an oldish man.'

BILL: 'You're no chicken yourself, you must be thirty.'

SARA: 'I was thirty-one last week.'

TERESA DEEVY

BILL: 'Sara! Don't say it! You'd want to look round.'

SARA: 'I spent my whole time looking round and wasn't able to find a fellow to suit me.'

BILL: 'Ah-h . . . the pity . . . We're all the same, and the world full of men and women.' (*Pause.*) 'It is like the sorting out of letters. I was in that department once, you know.'

SARA: 'I'm sure you were.'

BILL: 'Why are you sure? What do you infer by that?'

SARA: 'Nothing at all—only to say what's expected.'

BILL: 'A foolish habit.' (*Severely: then, gently.*) 'I am watching you a long time now, you might have noticed.'

SARA (*with a guffaw*): 'A knock at the door every morning, and for no reason.'

BILL: 'What will we do about this letter?'

SARA: 'Unless you'd alter the name you have on it.'

BILL: 'Now I can see you understand me.'

SARA: 'Bill, you're a knotty question.'

BILL: 'A good sensible girl with a happy heart, a good steady worker; the sort of girl to make a man happy.'

SARA: 'Won't the people be waiting for their letters?'

BILL: 'I am on the return journey.'

SARA: 'Oh, you would.'

BILL: 'You'd be my choice—if I'd be yours.'

SARA: 'Do you mean it?'

BILL: 'You are the girl of my desire. My world lies at your two feet.'

SARA: 'No! dont!' (*Steps back as though struck. Then, with fear.*) 'Would love be born from hearing that?'

BILL: 'I couldn't venture any opinion.' (*With his amazing restraint.*)

SARA: 'I wouldn't like that it would happen . . .' (*Low, fumbling*)'. . . to be caught up with this loving business; I'd be afraid—it might give you a fearful time.'

BILL: 'Will you read this letter?' (*Passionate.*)

SARA: 'Bill Kirwan why did you put your own name on it?' (*They are crying to one another now.*)

BILL: 'It will be yours.'

SARA: 'I'm leaving here—' (*wildly turning from him.*)

BILL: 'When did you make this decision?'

### STRANGE BIRTH

SARA: 'Only this minute. I'll give Mrs. Taylor my month's notice.'

BILL: 'She'll regret it.'

SARA: 'So will I. . . . "Sensible, happy"—what you call me. It would surprise you how happy you'd be washing and cleaning and shining the brasses, and watching one day follow another. . . . But all the people in this house . . . they're someway suffering, and by love. . . . There's nothing left in Mrs. Stims who's down below, only vinegar, that's all . . . because of someone she was fond of. . . . 'Twould terrify you. I think I'm better not to have it.'

BILL: 'Sensible, happy, comfortable, *coward!*'

SARA: 'Well maybe I am. I'd be afraid of my life now, so I would.'

BILL: 'We'll tear this up.' (*The letter.*)

SARA: 'No! don't tear it *yet*. . . . I'd like to see it.'

BILL: 'You won't see till you're ready to call yourself Mrs. Kirwan.'

SARA: 'Yes—but I'm ready. I am ready all the time—if you and I came to an agreement. I only ask that you won't go waking love in me.'

BILL: 'I won't marry without love at all. There's girls without end that I could have—hundreds of them.'

SARA (*groaning*): 'I am losing all my comfort. . . . Oh, Mrs. Taylor . . . (*with relief, seeing Mrs. Taylor come out of her room. Mrs. Taylor, now very much younger in appearance, is dressed in outdoor things and carries a shopping basket.*)

MRS. TAYLOR: 'What's it now?' (*Gaily.*) 'Have you told Bill he brought me the best of news.'

SARA: 'No, I didn't.' (*Dully.*) 'I forgot to tell him.'

MRS. TAYLOR (*to Bill*): 'Twenty years have fallen off me. My boy's coming home this evening. You brought the letter.'

BILL: 'I'm very glad.'

MRS. TAYLOR: 'For the fatted calf I'm going now.' (*Opens the hall door.*) ' . . . Oh, what a lovely morning . . . ' (*turns to Sara*) . . . 'There's nothing like a summer morning . . . '

SARA (*in hard tones*): 'Mr. Bassett couldn't bear sometimes that the sun would be shining.'

MRS. TAYLOR: 'How very foolish—but he's young, tell him,

TERESA DEEVY

Sara, that life lives only by power of contrast. How can we be happy unless we've been sad? . . .' (*turns to Bill*). And you called here this morning by mistake, I suppose (*laughingly*) or perhaps to ask Sara a question . . . where some house is located.'

BILL: 'That might be.' (*Mrs. Taylor laughs at the stolid reply: she goes, leaving the door open, the sun streams in.*)

SARA: 'I'd have laughed before when she said that—but now I couldn't laugh at all. . . . Isn't that a bad sign for me? . . . Happy and sad—what she was saying.'

BILL: 'I'll tear this up—(*the letter*)—you couldn't read it. You are not the kind I thought you—'

SARA: 'But, yes! I am!' (*a step towards him.*)

BILL: 'Sun and darkness, and your fear!'

SARA: 'Here! give it to me!' (*springs forward, seizes the letter.*)

BILL: 'Did I give it? or did you take it?'

(*Sara, arms crossed on breast, the letter clasped tightly in one hand, stands facing him.*)

SARA: 'I took it, Bill. I'll keep it now—come rain or sorrow. Tell it to me—all you said.'

BILL: 'I said you were a mine of wisdom—'

SARA: 'Me, is it?' (*a happy laugh.*)

BILL: 'I said I didn't know you yet.'

SARA: 'And you don't either' (*a shadow.*)

BILL: 'But that I know you're the mine I could dig in forever.'

SARA: 'That is queer—'

BILL: 'I said you had nature; kindness and depth in your easy ways, and you are happy.'

SARA: 'If you shut the door Bill we could have a kiss.'

BILL: 'But then you'd be destroyed entirely, since I'm not going to marry you.'

SARA (*after a moment*): For a minute that went stabbing through me. . . . I knew this was the way I'd be if love got born.'

BILL: 'Got born!' (*roughly catching her wrist, and drawing down her arm—uncrossing the arms.*) 'You have loved me for a long time past. I have seen it often in your eyes.'

#### STRANGE BIRTH

SARA: 'I think you're right. I didn't know. Now I'll keep a hold on it always' (*with great gentleness*).

BILL: 'I'll leave you now because I'm late—and I won't ask you to marry me—until to-morrow. You were too slow in the beginning—I'll come back to-morrow morning.' (*She smiles at him with the same gentleness: he turns and goes.*)

SARA: 'Don't shut the door!' (*but he has drawn it out. She sits down on the hall chair, her arms crossed again as though hugging a treasure to herself, the envelope held tightly in her hand. Mr. Bassett comes quickly downstairs, hurrying out to his day's work: at the door he stands for a moment, looks back at Sara.*)

MR. BASSETT: 'All the same Sara, wasn't she heartless . . .'

SARA: 'What matter . . . what matter . . .' (*quietly*) 'you have something.' (*He looks at her, puzzled, then, giving it up, hurries out.*)

*Curtain*

## EBB AND FLOW

---

MICHAEL MCLAVERTY

THE L-shaped row of houses above the cement pier gathered its armful of morning sun and on the scuffed grass in front of the doors lay a few geese as white as the houses and whiter even than the limestone walls that curved across the flinty fields of the island. The geese were content in the sun, and without rising to their feet they would nibble the grass that grew in reach of their necks or pausing would dab at their breasts, and the downy feathers lifting on the wind would come to rest in the crevices of walls or sailing higher would sway like flakes of snow and, lighter than the breath of wind, would alight on the backs of the waves that swelled to the grey sand on the shore.

A door opened and a dog came out, and shaking the hearth-ashes from his hide he scratched at the earth to ease the night's stiffness from his limbs and leaped at the geese with a spiteful snarl. The geese struggled to their feet, and screeching and scolding they padded awkwardly over the rough road, their cries tearing across the water, the fields, and the cliffs. Folding their wings they settled easily into the waves, calling now with subdued contentment as they felt the cold water wash the grit from their dry feet. They shook their tails, dipped their beaks in the water and curved about on the outgoing tide. The tide was going out fast: it was going out from the sand leaving shreds of froth like half-melted frost, it was going out clear and green over the tumbled masses of white rock, going out from the low shore at the back of the pier leaving heaps of searods stripped like bone, and farther to the south it was withdrawing from the black cliffs, slipping over their gables of shadow, and falling with a cluck-and-gluck over the stones and softly hissing through the foliage of rooted wrack.

Above the cliff-tops the sun cleaved through gaps in the hills, resting on the sheep, on the rabbits, and on the snails

#### EBB AND FLOW

that were groping towards the shadows of stones or to clumps of grass that offered a store of cooler shade. On the loughs among the hills the sun also shone, and there amid the shelter of the rushes the wild duck quelled the babble of their young for they had heard the cantankerous cries of geese or the rattle of a cow's chain as it moved in the milking-shed.

In a whitewashed house above one of the loughs Martin Gallagher had risen earlier than usual and having milked his cow he was now cleaning the steering-wheel of a ship that he had wrought into an ornamental gate at the entrance to his lonin. He whistled as he worked, polishing the brass tips of the wheel and wiping with an oily rag the eight spokes till they shone resin-red in the sun. He oiled the runners of the gate, and returning to the house he drew out the horse and cart, and after putting black polish on the hoofs of the horse he brushed them vigorously till they shone as bright as the shoes on his own feet. The previous evening he had repainted in white letters his name on the shaft of the cart, and it was now dry and clean except for a midge that had wriggled itself to death on one of the letters. He picked this off carefully with his finger-nail, and spreading a piece of clean sacking on the driving-board he was ready for the road. His dog heard the first rock of the wheel and she came racing from the back of the house.

'What were you up to?' Martin said to her, 'I'll have to leave you behind,' and he turned and lifted a small board, like the seat of a child's swing, from a nail on the outside wall. The dog slunk away from him and he had to call to her twice before she came cringing back to him. He took the board with its short loop of rope and fastened it to her collar till it swung loosely in front of her forepaws. 'We'll stop using the board when you stop worrying the sheep,' he said and patted her on the head to show that he wasn't vexed. She licked his hand, and when she hobbled away from him he called her back and shortened the rope so that the board wouldn't hit her too roughly if she happened to run.

From the road he looked back and saw her lying down on the doorstep in the sun. He loved his house best at this time of the morning with the two ash trees crouching their shoulders

MICHAEL MCLAVERTY

together at the gable-end, and the smoke hunching above the slates and bundling off before the breast of the wind. His heart went out to it, and he did right, he told himself, to leave the city and come back to the island where he was reared. Although he was forty years of age he had had enough of wanderings. For twenty years he had laboured in the city and on a coal-boat that sailed between Belfast and Whitehaven. He might still be on the coal-boat only for the unexpected meanness of a friend who had stolen money from him while he slept in a lodging-house near the docks. It was that that had finished him with the city, and that morning when he awoke and discovered his loss he had packed his belongings in a suitcase, drew his savings out of the bank, and returned to buy back his father's house with its three acres of land and its few hills for rearing sheep. At first the quiet of the place had confused him and he used to leave his lonely house of an evening and go to the pub in search of company he thought he'd never need. But in the pub the discontent of the young men who were bent on the city used to draw him into arguments that almost ended in a fight and he had to struggle with himself to beat down the urgency to flee once more to the city where life was not so confined as on the island. But always he had found something to subdue him. There was honesty here, he told himself, honesty and truth: there was no call to lock the fowl-house of an evening or to be up early to tend his lobster-pots in case of mean thievery: there was no policeman here, and no need for one. Men did not hinder one another: they helped a neighbour with the ploughing, they would share their bulls, would help with a cow that was calving or if a cow was dry they would ladle out milk to you without thought of payment. Time and again he had pondered on these things as he sat his lone of an evening, and this morning as his cart knocked in the ruts of the road and the rope-reins hung slack in his hands he had reflected on them again with a burst of refreshing satisfaction.

He began to sing but seeing a net of flies dandaling above the ears of his horse he broke off the spray of an ash and tied it above her head. He jolted on, past lakes as blue as the sky and bluer than the sea that could be seen in the wedges of the

hills. Overhead moved a solitary cloud and below on the land its shadow crawled, creeping over Martin and his horse, drawing its blind over the pane of a lake and unrolling it again till the water shone with the blueness of potato-spray. On approaching a hill he dismounted, threw the reins into the cart, and let the horse make her own time. At the top of the hill he saw below him the flat plain of the island, the geese in the fields, the houses sitting on their own shadows, and the broad loop of bay rippling in the wind. Around one house he saw a knot of people on the white road and two carts moving off. It was the Craigs leaving the Island and he hurried hoping he'd be in time to carry a box or two for them on his way to the pier where he himself was to await the arrival of an orphan lad to help him with the farm.

At the back of the house he saw the old grandfather parading back and forth and paying no attention to his little grandson who was shouting to him and throwing a painted ball into the air.

'So the day has come at last,' Martin hailed him and pulled up.

'It has. It has come!' the old man said, coming to the breast-high wall and resting his arms on it. 'They'll rue this day with every week that ends.'

Martin nodded with grave agreement.

'They're promising me the grand sights I'll see. They'll take me to Dublin they tell me, and they'll take me to the shipyards, and to see the tobacco made in factories. And they'll take me to the fine churches! But there's one place they'll take me,' and his fist clawed one of the loose stones on the wall. 'They'll take me back here, in God's name, and they'll bury me. Some day soon you'll see a boat coming into the bay and a yellow coffin shining on her in the sun and on the plate of that coffin you'll see my name printed in letters like mist.'

'I wouldn't look on it like that. You'll settle down in it like manys another islandman.'

'Not with my load of years! You need to give yourself to a place if you want peace out of it. I'll never do that! I've dug my grave giving in to them. But it's done now and there's

no going back on my word. The house is as bare as the empty boat-house. There's all that's left,' and he pointed to a sunny patch at the back of the house where there was a wooden box with a basin and a towel, and his razor on the window-sill above them. A white cat ran along the top of the wall and the old man fondled it, the cat rubbing her side against his watch-chain and pushing her head under his oxter. 'Will you take that cat, Martin? She'll run wild if nobody takes her. She's a great hunter.'

At that moment the little boy's ball flew over the wall and the horse shied and tumbled Martin into the cart. He scrambled to his feet and pulled at the reins, the wheels swerving and grinding on the gravel. The noise drew the boy's mother from the house but when she saw it was Martin Gallagher she looked at him coldly. She turned to her father and told him to hurry up and tidy himself and brush the cat's hairs from his waistcoat.

'I'm tidy enough as it is,' he shouted. 'If I'm not fit enough as I am you can go on without me.'

'You've no right to torment us a morning like this,' the daughter blazed at Martin. 'He was easy in his mind till you came along—you that can sit up high and mighty after making your pile in the city.'

'I made no pile,' Martin said quietly.

'You didn't buy your bit of land on the clippings of tin.'

'I bought it on hard-earned savings.'

'God increase it,' the old man said.

'Could I take a box or two down for you,' Martin said, trying to divert their talk.

Everything was gone she told him. He offered to give the old man a lift but she waved that aside.

'What's that you said?' the old man asked and strained over the wall.

'Nothing! Nothing,' the daughter spoke back, at the same time telling Martin to pull off if he had any decency in him at all.

Martin did as he was bid, and as the wheels crunched on the gravel he heard above the noise the old man barging and shouting at his daughter. It's a great pity he didn't trot past

the teaching I wouldn't stay here. It's their love for one another that keeps me stuck in this place.'

His eyes were fastened on the black bunch of people that were moving slowly down the hill. The old man was in front, his grandson holding him by the hand ; behind them were his daughter and son-in-law, and a few neighbours carrying suitcases. There was no sound of a voice from any of them, just the dull drag of their feet following their shadows on the dry road.

'God in Heaven if I were leaving I'd run!' said Vera. 'I'd expect nobody to give us a lift that morning. I wouldn't feel the rough stones under the shoes of my feet. I'd leave with my head held high and a smile of strength on my lips . . .' She caught him by the sleeve. 'What under God made you come back here!'

He didn't answer her; his eyes never left the group that was slowly approaching.

'It's like a funeral,' she said, 'I feel I'd like to sing and cheer them along. And would you look at all the women moving out from the houses. Even the very dogs are silent.' Her little girl came running from the back of the pier and screamed with delight as she held a streaming ribbon of wrack above her head. Her mother seized her by the arm and held her close to her in silence, and the wrack fell on the ground and covered its wet gleam in the dust. The group moved down the pier and their voices mumbled like a prayer. The little boy clutched his painted ball in one hand and held on to his granda by the other but when the ball fell from his hands and bounced on the pier his mother's voice could be heard shouting: 'Leave it be and hold tight to your granda!'

The little boy was the first to be put on the boat. His granda went next, after shaking hands with all the neighbours, and sat beside him at the stern. He didn't raise his head or stir from his place. He fingered the loose skin on his neck where he had cut himself shaving, stared with a chilled emptiness at the dry boards under his feet and listened to the clop of water rising and falling among the stone steps of the quay. The sail was unfurled and flapped above his head and as the boat moved out he raised himself up and stood with

his hat held against his breast. He looked at the women with their white handkerchiefs in their hands and at the men who were waving to him with their hands and caps.

‘Some day I’ll be back among you!’ he was heard to say. ‘Some day I’ll be back and that day, please God, will not be long.’ He sat down and put his arm around his grandson, the boat lepping into the waves, the wrinkles in the canvas smoothing out in the wind.

‘They shouldn’t have dragged him away,’ the women cried from the quay.

‘He’ll fret himself to death . . . It was cruel to take him. . . . They’ll rue this day. . . . As sure as there’s a God above they’ll rue this cruel day. . . . It’s a pity he listened to that daughter of his. . . . Only for the grandson they couldn’t have taken him against his will. . . . He’ll be back again, never you fear. . . . He’ll be back. . . . He’ll not be sitting up that day and clasping his grandson’s hand. . . . He’ll be clasping his own and the rosary beads lapped round them. . . . The men will carry him to his grave. . . . He’ll be at rest and he’ll be at peace among his own.’

The boat moved out quickly with the wind stripping her heels, and the forms of the people in the stern merged black in the distance and there was nothing to be seen only the tilt of the sail and her black hulk mounting the waves. The widow released her daughter’s hand and allowed her to sit on the parapet of the pier. The people remained as they were, knotted together with the intimacy of a common sorrow, and when the motor-boat came slowly in with her few passengers and bulging bag of mail Martin was the first to run forward to catch the mooring rope that was thrown from the boat to the quay. His boy was on her, a thin lad with tightly drawn skin pinched with sea-sickness. Martin gripped his hand as he stepped ashore; his hand was cold and the lad smiled sickly at him and gazed at the people with a shy bewildered look.

‘You’ll be as right as rain when you’ve a cup of tea in you,’ Martin said as he hurried from the pier and hoisted him and his suitcase into the cart. He was pulling out from the side of the boat-house when he was aware that Vera Higgins had followed them.

'Do you want a lift home?' he asked her.

'No, we can walk—there'd be too much of a load on the horse. . . . If there's a letter for you I'll bring it over myself.'

'There'll be no letter.'

'Well, maybe not. . . . That's a fine boy you've got there,' she went on, looking up at the lad. 'He might be too fine for a rough place like this. . . . You'll not hold him long I warrant you. He'll go away with the swallows.'

To get away from her he chugged at the reins, gave the horse a skelp with the rope and set off at a gallop. The boy smiled as he felt his feet juddering on the floorboards underneath him and he held on grimly to the seat. Presently the horse slowed down and he took a letter from his pocket and handed it to Martin. It was a letter from the orphanage and Martin learnt from it that the boy's name was James Rainey and that he was fifteen years of age; he read it aloud to himself and the boy heard for the first time that he was 'willing, honest, and obedient' and that the nuns would appreciate a telegram to announce his safe arrival.

'Sit you here, James, with the horse, and I'll be back in a minute,' and Martin swung over the side of the cart, cut across a field to the post-office, and sent off the telegram and hurried back.

'Now,' says he, taking the reins again, 'We'll not be long hitting the road.' He questioned him about his journey; and he told him he'd soon get used to the boats and the sea and that in no time at all he'd feel as much at home as a sheep on the hill or a duck in the lough.

Nearing the Craig's house he saw the last smoke from the last fire struggling weakly from the chimney. He stopped and got down. The white cat was on the window-sill but when he tried to catch her she jumped away from him and squeezed herself under the garden-gate and hid among the dockens and nettles. There was a new padlock on the door, a thin bit of soap on the window-sill, and through the bare pane he saw the tracks of a brush on the floor and its sweepings smouldering among the ashes on the hearth. He got into the cart again, handed the reins to the lad, and they set off into the face of the sun. He was silent for a while as he thought of the

old man and of the first signs of decay that would soon settle themselves on the empty house: the padlock would rust in the salty winds, the starlings poke holes in the thatch, and the square chimney loosen and decay like a blackened tooth. Aye, nothing decays like an empty house, he had heard said, and nothing shows its reward like a well-cared one.

He sighed and patted the lad on the knee: 'Never fear, my lad, but we'll have the brave times together. . . . What's mine is yours. . . . I've a handy wee boat and some fine-evening we'll give the fish a flake or two with the rods. . . . I'm making a model yacht and the two of us will carry off the first prize in the lough some fine Sunday.'

'Have you a dog?'

'I have, James, but she's doing a bit of hard labour just now. She'd worry sheep if you didn't watch her and if she doesn't mend her ways we'll have to get rid of her and get a pup from the lighthouse.' He turned round on the seat and with his arm on the boy's shoulder he pointed out the lighthouse standing like a bandaged leg on top of the cliffs.

The boy sat closer to him. Martin began to whistle, and turning a bend on the road the horse moved smartly, for there above them was the house, standing clean and white in the sun, the brass tips of the gate shining, and the dog with her board hanging motionlessly from her neck and her tail wagging with the slow rhythm of pleasurable recognition.

He lifted down the lad from the cart, unyoked the horse, took the board from the dog's neck and lifted the latch of the door.

'We're home at last, James,' he said, 'I'll not be long livening up the fire inunder the kettle.'

# POEMS

---

## ULYSSES HIS SON

by EWART MILNE

Long labouring with an hopeful heart  
to give my country's poetry music and story  
such as would pose this fearful age's problem  
I followed truly my own, as my wandering father's bidding—

And yet who knows my name? Not poet or king  
but politic church is lord of their culture,  
which as it holds the sceptre, holds the isle,  
and as it owns allegiance not to them, betrays them.

Idol worshippers rule my country,  
racial demagogues rule my country,  
graven with images as an Easter Island  
is my pearl of the west.

But some are troubled, seeing on the waters' moving face  
not destiny but a lifelong mockery of life and love,  
and carefully I would arm them with a giant strength  
to overturn corruption, and twilight of the gods make yield.

Then work, my craft! When truth the world is flooding  
somewhere it must touch that most insular island people,  
and they with light on their eyes, become terrible  
as with hunger and thirst, make sacramental man's city.

## NEITHER HERE NOR THERE

by W. R. RODGERS

In that land all Is, and nothing's Ought;  
 No owners or notices, only birds;  
 No walls anywhere, only lean wire of words  
 Worming brokenly out from eaten thought;  
 No oats growing, only ankle-lace grass  
 Easing and not resenting the feet that pass;  
 No enormous beasts, only names of them;  
 No bones made, bans laid, or boons expected,  
 No contracts entails, hereditaments,  
 Anything at all that might tie or hem.

In that land all's lackadaisical;  
 No lakes of coddled spawn, and no locked ponds  
 Of settled purpose, no netted fishes;  
 But only inkling streams and running fronds  
 Fritillaried with dreams, weedy with wishes;  
 Nor arrogant talk is heard, haggling phrase,  
 But undertones, and hesitance, and haze;  
 On clear days mountains of meaning are seen  
 Humped high on the horizon; no one goes  
 To con their meaning, no one cares or knows.

In that land all's flat, indifferent; there  
 Is neither springing house nor hanging tent,  
 No aims are entertained, and nothing is meant,  
 For there are no ends and no trends, no roads,  
 Only follow your nose to anywhere.  
 No one is born there, no one stays or dies,  
 For it is a timeless land, it lies  
 Between the act and the attrition, it  
 Marks off bound from rebound, make from break, tit  
 From tat, also to-day from to-morrow.  
 No Cause there comes to term, but each departs  
 Elsewhere to whelp its deeds, expel its darts;  
 There are no homecomings, of course, no good-byes  
 In that land, neither yearning nor scorning,  
 Though at night there is the smell of morning.

## THE STARS STAND UP IN THE SKY

*(From the Irish)*

by DAVID MARCUS

The stars stand up in the sky,  
 The sun and the moon are gone;  
 The sea has been drained till it's dry,  
 And his sway has forsaken the swan.  
 The cuckoo on top of the tree  
 Is repeating my lovely one's flight—  
 My girl of the curls flowing free  
 She has gone, and I cry in my plight!

Three things through love I see:  
 Pain, and death, and sin;  
 And my mind is torturing me  
 With the sorrow my heart is in.  
 Oh why did I love her at all  
 And why did she wander away—  
 Ah, my girl, you're the cause of my fall,  
 May the Lord God forgive you someday.

## ISLE DE ST. OUEN

*(attributed to Edouard Manet)*

by BLANAIID SALKELD

Bright colours side by side compose a chord  
 That beats the blood into an airy lilt,  
 Sets common thought at a precarious tilt,  
 Changing the sense of a familiar word.  
 I will not cut down roses with my sword,  
 From living hearts enough blood has been spilt—  
 Man is already bound and drowned in guilt—  
 Uselessly spent, and fearfully abhorred.

Serenity. . . . See . . . here now has the Lord  
 Been walking in His garden, amid cool  
 Savours and casual scents of a close season:  
 For this smooth pause . . . there is no other  
 This depth, this bed-rock of the beautiful,  
 Essence of level colours in accord.

## RETURN TO THE CITY

by SAM HARRISON

This place recurs in my life like a bad habit  
 grown stale with repetition—tired of it, . . .  
 I sit in a bright café among the clatter  
 of dishes, the glitter of cutlery and glass,  
 watching the plangent harpstrings of the rain  
 slanting across the window, and aware  
 that the eyes of the dead are looking over my shoulder:  
 the eyes of one whose dark disturbing body  
 lies deep as summer drowned, in whom all loves,  
 the first and last, the best and worst, were joined.

Then, as waitresses yawn and start to pile  
 chairs on tables, I think, dear ghost, of how  
 you went away without a word or a warning,  
 leaving the city empty of delight,  
 and how, in a little while, I must resume  
 my roaming through its aimless thoroughfares—  
 a man of no direction, wandering  
 among the phantom traffic of the past,  
 alone again, and all the lonelier  
 for having dared this labyrinth with you.

## THE BLIND MONTH

by ROBERT GREACEN

November fills bridges, streets and even country lanes  
 With yellow vapours, blows on the tired heart  
 A chill reminder of the year's decay,  
 Shunts fog into the throat, fog into the mind,  
 Blankets desire, outlaws blood's summer riot.  
 Now the October rust-red and charred-brown days recede  
 Into the calendar, traceless though kind-scented,  
 All fullness frosted, all richness raided.  
 November, month of the dead, month of shadows,  
 Month of the year's betrayal, our invocation  
 Is a hoarse mouthing to the misty gods  
 For a single sign, for one grey dove on attic roof,  
 For affirmation of faith in this blind month.

## DERRIAGHY

by ROY McFADDEN

Beside the gravestone with the family names—  
*William and Robert, Thomas, John and James*—  
 She thinks back gently on her grandfather  
 Who built the stony house that fathered her;  
 Imagines sun-strong hands, square-bearded chin,  
 Mouth quick with insult, soft with Sunday sin,  
 Hard as his house outside, inside as warm  
 As his own kitchen fire on nights when storm  
 Straddled the roof and thumped a Lambeg drum  
 And at quiet living raised an impudent thumb.  
 The builder lives so long as his house stands . . .  
 But she has only sunshine in her hands.

POETRY

More than the grave divides her from the dead.  
The simple heart, invaded by the head,  
Is stranger in her family's townland,  
The soil turned alien to her book-white hand.  
Faces and places marked the traveller  
And with each mark made her a foreigner  
To the stone house with the hen-clouded gate,  
The lumpy fields, and the triumvirate  
Of sun and wind and rain whose blessing wrings  
Flowers from the stone, unlocks the heart's caged wings . . .  
She might have stayed and roughened word and stare,  
Instead of plaiting sunshine in her hair.

She might have stayed there in the muck of life  
And dust of death, tending and rearing: wife,  
Mother, mourner, executioner,  
Mouthing the field-lore of her grandfather,  
With his shrewd eye assessing crop and beast,  
Geography of cloud spread in the east,  
Tied as a tree to her own piece of ground,  
To add at last another weedy mound  
Within the iron railings on the hill  
And mark for all time decent burial.  
*William and Robert, Thomas, John and James:*  
The stone is full now. There'll be no more names.

She falls between two worlds: in drawing\* room  
Heavy with talk, she hankers for the bloom  
Of cloud on hill, the rhythm of a field;  
And, other times, hair leaf-blown, stout shoes heeled  
And toed with clabber, she lusts for the froth  
Of thin town-talk like any light-drunk moth  
Battering at a window pane. . . . The light  
Breaks now; threatening shoulders of the night  
Push nearer. . . . Listen, silent, grave old man ;  
The stony house is empty, and the wan  
Moonlight runs like nettles in each room,  
And lays at last your ghost in a cold tomb.

## SHADOW

by SEÁN JENNETT

A church clock chimes across the gusty city,  
 a staring fellow to the yellow moon;  
 a distant owl shouts like a wounded man;  
hard, clogged by frost, feet ring across the white  
 flag pavements of abraded barebone streets;  
 each passer-by drags a long, laggard gawk  
 of shadow, his living minikin of dark  
 and silence lacking to the foot.

My shadow followed at my steel-shod heel  
 fretted and broken by sharp darts of fire  
 struck from the stone, but as before  
 joined to my foot and once more was whole:  
 until at a sudden swinging blow a light  
 fell on the heart, that like spirit caught  
 and all at once roared and was agate  
 and I felt at my own heart this fierce heat.

O heart of stone, my heart, slag and ash  
 that feeds no fire, my heart, still dumb  
 and answerless, yet hard to blame,  
 shook so by shocks, too subject to the lash,  
 look how this shadow heart is sensitive,  
 incendiary, look how it burns:  
 O God, my heart, must cogs and kings by turns  
 rule me all ways, cast out my life, my love.

## POEM

by VALENTIN IREMONGER

'Twenty crocuses in my garden to-day,' she said,  
'I know the Spring is here.' She lay on the bed,  
Happily, while I stood at the window, sideways,  
Thinking, 'This is how it has been always.'

Somebody else has been happy because Spring was here,  
Lazily turning on a bed, smiling. The mere veneer  
Of acquiescence was all that I ever possessed.  
I know there is a lot that I have missed

Yet, afraid of March gales, there was nothing I could do  
But agree, with reservations—remembering too  
How winter struck us dumb not so long ago  
And how it would pay us back for Spring, blow for blow.

# AN EVENING'S RECREATION

---

MICHAEL O'BEIRNE

IT was eight in the evening when Mr. Hayes arrived, shook the rain from his umbrella, and went up the hollow-sounding house to a door on which a card hung, inscribed *Guest Students' Club*. Mr. Hayes was plump and low-sized; he wore glasses and as a rule had a somewhat apprehensive manner. He had to depend upon casual employment as a trombonist for dance bands. One was conscious, as he knocked and entered, of his wrists. Mr. Hayes had continuous twinges of rheumatism and he usually walked with his arms wide from the body.

'Good evening!' he said in a bright, pleasant voice, coming in and closing the door gently.

Only the President was there so far. He was smoking his pipe, and he nodded and smiled at Mr. Hayes and went on removing the green cloth from the billiards table. The room lay bright beneath three cone shaded electric lights. A log fire flamed. Beyond the room-reflecting windows could be discerned, as though a second picture marred the negative, the murky mass of houses opposite gapped by a glinting asphalt road.

'Looks like being a bad night,' said the President, smiling. He moved to the ping-pong table from which Mr. Hayes, his overcoat discarded, helped him to untie the made-to-measure covering.

'Yes, indeed,' said Mr. Hayes. He felt urbane. He was a man of thirty, unmarried, usually unemployed; but that afternoon he had been to confession, and he was imbued with a sense of tranquillity, of freedom from mundane preoccupations. The President and he, and all humanity, he realized, were brothers. He smiled softly and meditatively as he unrolled the ping-pong net, and with an anxious, alert glance across the table, set his upright in line.

Thank God, thought Mr. Hayes, that I'm here to-night, instead of at the pictures. And the thought of the dark picture

house, and the temptations of that place, made him squirm with momentary self-loathing.

'Well,' said the President, removing his pipe and standing back, 'that's that. I expect we'll have Hazel along this evening.'

'Oh, good. Seems a nice sort of chap, Mr. Hazel. Do you think I should ask him along to Father Dillon's lecture?'

The President nodded and was about to speak, but he paused first, with a thoughtful expression; and Mr. Hayes half-heard a footfall on the stairs. 'There's no harm in trying,' said the President, turning immediately with a welcoming smile to the door, where two African students had appeared.

'Hello, Mr. Nugent! Hello, Mr. Zanoubi! How goes it?' He shook hands; the visitors stood smiling. 'Isn't it an awful night?'

'Yes, the weather is very bad,' said Mr. Nugent in a deep, organ-toned voice. He was taller than his companion, but both men seemed sad and reserved. They had the same air of conscious dignity.

'I don't think you've met Mr. Hayes yet,' said the President. 'Mr. Hayes, Mr. Nugent. Mr. Hayes, Mr. Zanoubi.'

The students wore well-cut, heavy overcoats and after the brief hand-clasps Mr. Hayes experienced a sense of isolation. He stood watching the bronzed figures, admiring their lithe, easy movements taking off their greatcoats. He could feel something faintly chilling about their aspect of aloofness, almost of contempt. A glow of loving-kindness suffused Mr. Hayes as he remembered that external attitudes meant nothing; that in fact all men were brothers. The President, a young, unaffected man whose hair was always well brushed, stood smoking and talking with the African students, and meanwhile two more members of the Catholic Action Group arrived, bringing Mr. Hazel with them. Mr. Hazel gazed gloomily about him through his gold-rimmed spectacles. More people were arriving. The warble of talk came in abrupt waves, the voices mingling, the lighter, subtle timbre of the Africans contrasting with the calm, deliberate Dublin accents.

'What about a game of table-tennis, Mr. Hazel? Warm

you up!' said the President genially, taking the new-comer's arm. Mr. Hayes was at the billiard's table fingering the chalk. Rheumatism stabbed his wrist; he put the chalk down. But Mr. Zanoubi and Mr. Nugent were strolling over. They stood at the table selecting their cues. Mr. Hayes smiled welcomingly.

'Will I keep the score?' he asked. 'I don't know much about the game, but if it's any help.'

The Negro students were engrossed. Mr. Nugent gripped two balls and held his fists towards Mr. Zanoubi, who made his choice. The game began. Mr. Zanoubi, having started the balls rolling, stood still and watched. He was lightly built, with an aquiline, aristocratic face and heavy-lidded eyes. With his next stroke he pocketed the red. It went down in the furthermost corner from Mr. Hayes, who darted forward and put the ball back in position. He watched expectantly, but there was no further score. From the ping-pong table came the bok-bok of the bats, laughter and talk. Two Indians had joined the group who followed with their eyes the ghostly chalk-strokes of the ball.

Mr. Hayes coughed tentatively.

'Which are you, Mr. Zanoubi? White or spot?'

'I'm plain,' said Mr. Zanoubi, shrugging.

'Then that's three for you, I think?' said Mr. Hayes inquiringly. 'I suppose red counts as—'

'Shot, sir!' cried Mr. Zanoubi.

The balls, having clicked, went rolling smoothly on their egg-shaped shadows over the green baize. Smiling, Mr. Nugent raised his cue. As he settled, taking aim, the three-pronged shadow melted into one, deep green.

Clack-clack-clack!

'H'm! There's an easy cannon for you, Nugent,' remarked Mr. Zanoubi.

'No such luck!' The player's broad, bronzed face rose; he gave Mr. Hayes a flitting smile, 'There, what did I tell you?'

Mr. Hayes made a tentative, expectant movement.

'What was your score, Mr. Nugent?'

'Seven,' said the African, his eyes on the balls. Mr. Hayes gripped the score-card and rheumatism jabbed his knuckles;

he thought how nice it was being there, doing some good, helping these Negroes to enjoy themselves. One of them, he remembered, had said that a crowd of children ran after him, all the way down Townsend street, shouting 'Nigger!'

'Two,' said Mr. Zanoubi, grounding his cue. He did not glance at Mr. Hayes.

'You're five now,' said Mr. Hayes, and moved the pointer. Looking up, he saw Mr. Zanoubi gazing contemptuously at the table. Mr. Hayes was uncertain of the score. He thought he had made a mistake, and that the other was impatient with him. Stooping, his face heated, he retrieved a hopping ping-pong ball; and with a feeling of confusion and guilt he observed Mr. Zanoubi playing again.

'Three, and one away,' said Mr. Zanoubi. He turned his dark, disdainful face to Mr. Hayes. 'Have you marked Mr. Nugent's score?'

'I'm afraid I didn't! I'm awfully sorry.'

Mr. Hayes felt vaguely irritated, for neither of the students volunteered the needed information. As the game proceeded, he continually lost count, or was doubtful about the value of certain strokes, and he felt stupid. He began to smart under the indifferent, almost arrogant aloofness of the players.

'Look here, I'm spot!' said Mr. Nugent, pointing to the card. 'You should have given me that eight, not him.'

'Oh! Sorry!' Mr. Hayes made the correction and added, smiling feebly: 'I'm afraid I must seem very stupid. I forgot for the moment. I thought you were plain.'

Mr. Nugent was chalking his cue. He stooped, took aim. Mr. Hayes felt rebuffed. He had hoped Mr. Nugent would nod, or say something friendly, or at least smile. Well, to hell with you both! he thought, enraged; and Mr. Zanoubi's disdainful face slid past his line of vision. I've a good mind to take my hat and coat and walk right out! fumed Mr. Hayes, but he continued counting the points scored. Leaning with conscious negligence against the bookcase of Catholic literature, he saw Mr. Zanoubi straighten.

'Yes? What's the score?'

'Thirty all told,' Mr. Zanoubi murmured, turning away from him, watching the game. Mr. Hayes was bewildered.

All the voices were babbling together. His right arm felt stiff, and it burned.

'Only three more for game, Mr. Nugent,' he said, with relief.

Clack-clack-clack!

'Oh, good for you, Nugent!' exclaimed Mr. Zanoubi.

Mr. Hayes, with a fixed smile, took two steps forward.

'That's game!'

'Bet you I pot the red, Zanoubi,' said Mr. Nugent lazily, sloping his cue.

'Remember, I want my revenge.'

'Okay. We'll have another game now.'

Mr. Hayes saw a gold cigarette-case extended towards him. He hesitated, glanced up at Mr. Nugent's smiling face, and took a cigarette.

'Thank you,' he said.

Mr. Zanoubi did not smoke.

'Pardon me,' said Mr. Hayes, reaching across him with a lighted match.

'Thanks, Mr. Hayes.' Mr. Nugent tilted his head back, watching the folds of pale-blue smoke emerging from his lips.

Mr. Hayes, his fingers trembling, puffed his cigarette-smoke sideways, and said something about how the weather affected him. 'Rheumatism, you know. The rain is bad for me.' Mr. Zanoubi inclined his head, smiling faintly. Mollified, the jazz-band player stood beside the Africans, on equal terms, listening to their conversation and occasionally offering a comment; and gradually his emotions quietened, and he felt nothing but good-will towards all.

'We'll have a cup of tea now,' said the President, coming over unobtrusively. 'When you're ready, gentlemen.'

# THE PENSION

---

JOHN D. STEWART

I SAW the Old Man before he saw me—civilians are easier to spot than soldiers, they vary more. There he stood on the platform, in his dark overcoat and bowler hat, gazing at the train with his mouth open. Older-looking than my picture of him, and smaller, somehow.

I swung the door open with my knee, sidled my pack through it, and jumped down before she stopped. My steel tips clattered on the concrete—funny how I never got used to that in six years—and then I swung round and he was coming running.

‘Good lad!’ he said, over and over again, ‘Good lad! Good lad! Six years! Good lad! Thank God—’ All the time he squeezed my arm.

We walked down the platform half sideways, crowds and engines roaring round us, nothing but noise and confusion.

‘Man, but you’re big!’ he shouted. ‘You’ve put on weight, so you have!’

‘Six years,’ I shouted back, ‘I was only nineteen when I left you.’ His face shadowed over at once, and I wished I had said ‘When I joined up’. ‘I was only a boy then—’

‘You were, you were indeed—only a lump of a lad. This’ll be a big day for the Mother!’

‘How is she?’

‘Grand! They’re all grand, the girls too, and their weans. They’re looking forward to seeing you—’

We manoeuvred through the ticket gate.

‘They were up half the night,’ he gasped, bursting out on the other side of it—‘they were up half the night, fussing and fistling about. They think I don’t hear these things, but I hear plenty. How are you off for food, eh? When last did you get a bite?’

‘On the train, somewhere in Scotland—cup of cold char and a meatpie—’

'You must be starving. No need to go hungry here—you're back in Belfast now!' He bore me over towards the refreshment room. We went into the bar and his eye swept across the bottles defiantly. 'Well? Tea, coffee, something to eat?'

'I think I'll have a bottle of stout,' I said. Silence for a second.

'Eh? Will you? Oh well, we don't come home from the wars every day. A bottle of—er, stout, please, and a glass of lemonade.'

'Only lemon soda, grapefruit or still orange,' said the barmaid, pouring the stout.

He waved his hand at her. 'Lemon, lemon—anything at all.'

We carried the drinks to a marble table and sat against the wall.

'Not a bad place this—not bad at all,' he looked round at the panelling, 'they don't do joinery work like that now,' and back at me, 'what sort of a crossing had you?'

'All right. Will they be waiting for us at home?'

'Time enough. Your train was early. I told her it would likely be late—they all are nowadays, they blame it on the war, everything's gone to pot.'

'Business is O.K., surely?'

'Oh, not too bad—did the Mother tell you?'

'She did—she wrote about it. You've been doing well.'

'Had to work for it. Profit's smaller now in the building line, but there's plenty of work . . .'

He went on about his wartime business—emergency defence works, cost-plus contracts, blitz repairs. He was surefooted now, on solid ground. My mother's letters came into my head while he talked. ' . . . Don't be angry at your father, Tom, he is a good man and a kind man, really he is, . . . he was made hard by his business. Write to him, Tom dear, he prays for you every night . . . he says he drove you away . . .'

'How's Mother?' I asked him, when he paused.

'Grand, grand—at least, she's well enough,' he pondered a moment. 'You'll see a change. Happy enough—singing and humming round the house all day and half the night. Never stops working. Your sisters keep her busy, minding their

babies for them—but she likes it. She's beginning to dote a bit, though—'

. 'How?'

'Och, she's apt to squander. Wastes good money if you don't keep an eye on her—takes notions and buys rubbish. You can't trust her judgment now—'

'You never did,' I said.

'What's that?'

'You never did,' I said, getting up, 'let's go—we'll take a taxi.'

'Aye, if we can get one,' he drained his lemon soda. 'They're an independent crowd of ruffians, these taximen.'

It was too much for Mother, the girls put her to bed at nine. I went up to my room then—the return room on the first landing. She had 'done it up' herself. She had distempered the walls in yellow and dabbed them over with pink. She had painted the woodwork a pale blue. Blue for a boy. She had framed my school drawings with passe-partout and polished my broken airgun. There were football photographs on the iron mantelpiece and paper spills in the little hearth. There was a parchment lampshade decorated with goldfish, and a cloth envelope on the bedcover with 'Pyjamas' traced on it in careful stitches.

I put my suitcase on the bed and began to unpack. Bits of leatherwork for my sisters, and wrought silver bracelets I had bought in Alex. A calabash pipe for the Old Man, a sandal-wood box for Mother. I had nearly finished when I heard her calling me. 'Tommy! Tommy!' softly, so as not to be heard down below. I lifted the box and went up to her room.

'I have a little surprise for you, dear.' She hoisted her bag on to the bed with a great air of mystery. She searched in its rustling depths and fished out a tissue paper parcel tied with red twine. 'Here you are—a little present.'

'The room's present enough for me,' I said, 'and to be home again.'

'Do you like it?'

'Lovely.'

'Did you notice the curtains?'

'The curtains? Oh, sure . . .'

## THE PENSION

'I knew you would!' she laughed. 'I was in every shop in the town for a circus print—you always were daft about circuses!'

'Dead on.'

Then she remembered the present. 'Open it, open it.'

It was a big pocket knife with many blades and gadgets. 'Just what I've always wanted,' I said.

'But I never would let you have one. Too dangerous. But you can handle dangerous things now, can't you?'

'I can.'

'And something else . . .' she plunged into the bag again, 'nothing really—just a little joke—here—no—yes, here it is!'

She watched me breathlessly while I peeled the paper off. It was a small tin globe with a grotesque red face painted on it, a hole for the mouth.

'Pencil sharpener,' she said, 'you twirl the pencils in here. See who it's like? See who it is? Remember?'

I couldn't remember.

'Old Johnson,' she laughed, 'you remember—Johnson the breadman—the man that threatened to law your father when you shouted "Cherrynose" at him?'

'I remember; I remember him well.'

'Of course you do,' she said, and she lay back on her pillow.

I gave her the sandalwood box. She smelled it, and thanked me and rested for a while. Then she beckoned. 'Come here—a wee secret . . .' I leant over her. 'Don't show the knife to your father, he's funny, you know—about money—'

'Still the same?' I asked her, 'He must be wealthy now?'

'He is, but he's careful. You know how it is, son. His business made him like that. Don't let him see it, now. Promise?'

I promised, and kissed her, and told her to go to sleep. When I went downstairs the Old Man was sitting there alone.

'A pipe for you,' I said, 'from Egypt.'

'Och you shouldn't have bothered—' he unwrapped it. 'Beautiful—that cost a pretty penny! It would nearly start me smoking again. I stopped, you know, when the price went up. It's a grand pipe; very good of you . . .'

'Not at all.'

We sat there looking at the fire.

'I would like to give *you* something,' he said suddenly, 'or do something for you—I'm that glad to see you back safe and well. Is there anything you would like now—anything at all?'

'No, I'm all right. Nothing, really. I'm quite content. Glad to be home again.'

'Some small thing, maybe—you've done well, you've done us credit—all of us. I'm not afraid of a bit of expense—on occasion. . . .'

He waited.

'There's nothing I want,' I said, 'nothing I need.' There wasn't—nothing seemed to matter much.

'Oh well—I'm sorry.' He was hurt.

I had the idea, then. 'Well, perhaps there is something. You're well off, now—pretty comfortable?'

'I am, thank God, I am. My worrying days are over.'

'I want you to give Mother ten shillings a week for the rest of her life.'

He swung round and stared at me. 'Eh? What for? Sure, she has the lot, anything I have is hers, she's only to ask. She knows that. After I'm gone she'll have everything. Ten shillings a week! What for?'

'Just for herself.'

'But she doesn't want it! She doesn't need it. I pay all the bills, and if she wants anything personal—in the clothing line or the like of that, she asks me for it and she gets it.'

I said nothing at all.

'She has never asked for spending money.'

'She never will,' I said.

'Listen, you don't maybe know our arrangements. Believe me your mother lacks for nothing. Ten shillings a week! Where would she spend it?'

'In the variety markets and sixpenny stores—on hobby horses and paper hats and lollipops. Nine and elevenpence of it on her children and grandchildren, and the other penny on herself—or more likely on *you*.'

After a while he said quietly, 'All right. All right, she'll get it.'

'Thanks, fathcr.'

That was on a Monday. Friday night was 'pay night', it always had been, ever since the Old Man was a joiner at the bench, getting his wages weekly. They sat one on each side of the kitchen table, he with his wallet and cheque book before him, she with her bills and dockets. They talked for a long time, doing the weekly accounts. I sat at the fire, reading.

At last I heard him say, 'Is that the lot?'

'Yes, dear,' said Mother.

'Well, there. There's a half note extra. Tom here says I'm to give it to you every week.'

'What for, dear?'

'God knows,' he said, 'ask Tom there.'

I looked up at her and smiled, but she didn't smile back. She just sat there and looked at us. Then, all of a sudden she got up and went out of the kitchen. I remember wishing some of the girls were about—they're never there when they're wanted. I was going after her myself when the Old Man stopped me.

'What sort of a place is this Italy?' he asked me, stuffing his wallet back inside his coat.

# THE RED ORCHARD

---

MICHAEL LUCEY

‘YOUNG Adam,’ says dad.

‘I want another apple,’ I say again.

‘Disobedience!’ Mother looked at me, severe-like. ‘You got your fill of apples and were told the rest were being kept for the birthday. Yet you had to steal another. Ah, now you’ll have an apple tree growing in your inside.’

‘Is that true, mother?’

She gazed through the window at the blazing sun.

‘Of course it is.’

Dad lifted his eyes from the kettle with, ‘Tis too late to look sorry boy. You’re ruined now.’

‘I don’t believe it.’

‘You’ll see.’ Mother looked at me, a tear in each eye. ‘You choose a lovely time too—with Rosie God knows where.’

‘I was going to look for her.’

‘And stole instead.’

‘Sit down,’ says dad. ‘You’ll wear out our newly-boarded floor in no time.’

I sat by the summer fire with him. He and mother were occupied with their thoughts and left me to mine.

Then dad speaks over to her, ‘Tis no use keeping your nose to the window. If she’s to come back she’ll come back.’

‘Den—is!’

Patsy calling me.

‘We’re all out,’ murmurs dad.

‘I’m going out,’ I says.

‘Then clear!’

‘And have you get lost, too?’ mother protests, turning on her stool.

‘Den—is!’

‘Oh, go away with the ruffian! After bringing you both into the world I’ll only have to get resigned to seeing you love it more every day.’

I opened the door.

Patsy whispers, 'Any more apples?'

'They're put away for to-morrow.'

'Go back and whip a few.'

I made a dog back through the kitchen and into the room. In the pulled-open drawer the red apples lay temptingly. Suddenly I felt very guilty. I grabbed one, a small one, and made a dog back through the kitchen.

I had one hand on the latch, one in my pants-pocket with the apple, when dad says to my back, 'Why are you blushing, boy?'

'Forgot my top,' I gasp.

Then Patsy and I left the lane behind us. We stopped at the Castle wall.

He looked at the apple with, 'A mangy one!'

'But real rosy.' I took a bite. 'Beautiful!'

It was at my lips for another bite when Patsy grabbed it. One mouthful and he handed me the naked stem.

'Don't look sore,' he says. 'I can take you to trees of them.'

'But these grew out foreign.'

'This is a place you never saw. Coming, windy?'

I hesitated. 'I must search for Rosie.'

'Ah, she's sunning her nose somewhere. Come on before your mother calls you.'

We belted down the river road, up through the bohereen, through the Glen and up past the Friary.

Behind the Friary was somewhere I had always wanted to go. When mother spoke about 'out into the world', I imagined the sky going down to the fields up there. Now I was going to see. The two of us hurried up, keeping to the centre of the narrow road.

Before we were near enough to see the grass on the grassy road a man met us. Alex the postman.

He asks, 'Where are ye bound for?'

'Hell for orders,' says Patsy.

'I know you are. Denis?'

'Well—' I hesitated.

'Don't know, I suppose. Well, does your mother—'

MICHAEL LUCEY

Eyeing the grassy road, I interrupt, 'We're looking for Rosie. She's missing since breakfast.'

'Are ye after dinner?'

'Yes.'

'Then Rosie is missing.'

A car hooted to get past, and he walked on with his bag of letters.

We reached the top of the hill to find the sky as far off as ever. Then I remembered being told the earth is round and the sky just space. But the grassy road was true enough. It wound, rising and falling, into the sky.

It took us to a wall in a valley.

'Hungry?' asks Patsy.

'Yes.'

'I'm famished. But we're here.'

He went first over a gap in the wall. And inside we both stood, devouring the lovely sight.

'What did I tell you?' he cries. 'Miles of them!'

'All ripe.'

An apple fell from a high branch. I stretched a hand and caught it.

Patsy was walking through the trees, eating from one hand and filling his pockets with the other. I followed suit.

Suddenly he dragged me to the ground.

'Whisht!' says he, looking to the right.

Someone was walking out of the trees, a man, looking up at the sky. We shivered, afraid he would see us. He walked straight at me and I was too frightened to roll out of the way. Just in time he looked down. Without showing surprise he stepped aside and continued walking.

I wanted to go home but would not give in to it. Neither of us was hungry now though. We just walked on, looking all round.

I spotted the figure lying under a tree.

'Look!' I says, and we turned left towards it. There, fast asleep, was Rosie.

'What did I say?' says Patsy. 'Sunning her nose.'

'Rosie.'

She awoke and just looked at us.

THE RED ORCHARD

I demand, 'How, in the name of Adam, did you come to be here?'

'Oh, I got a spin.'

'In what?'

'A car. From a beautiful man.'

I thought of the man we had seen. 'Why?'

'After mother refused me another apple I ran away. I didn't know where I was going; but the man picked me up on the grassy road.'

Asks Patsy, 'Eat many apples?'

'Tons. And my dinner in the house.'

Through the trees I saw golden windows. One was by far the biggest window I had ever seen. It opened wide and the man stood just above the ground, his face glowing. Again he walked towards us.

'Good evening,' he greets, looking from me to Patsy.

Ventures Patsy, 'We were looking for Rosie here.'

'Oh, you're good seekers. Rosie says she wants to stay though.'

'For ever,' says Rosie.

'You can't,' I tell her. 'What about mother and dad?'

'They can come after me as well.'

'They will,' says the man. 'They're on their way now.'

'How do you know?'

'Because I do know,' he smiles. 'Boys, have another meal of apples while you're waiting.'

And he returned through the golden window.

'He knew,' says Patsy, awed. 'He saw us scalloping the apples.'

Rosie got to her feet with, 'I won't stay after all. I'm going home.'

'Now.' A sweet voice.

It was a strange lady. With her were mother and dad.

'How?' was all I could say.

Says mother, 'The lady brought us here in her car. And now she's taking us all back.'

'A spin!' cries Patsy, delighted.

'And, Rosie, the postman brought a parcel from Uncle Max for your birthday. A surprise for to-morrow.'

MICHAEL LUCEY

‘A toy house.’ Dad would spoil it.

The lady had started back to the road. We followed at a little distance.

‘When I opened the door and saw her,’ declares dad, ‘I knew Rosie was found. A handsome woman!’

To me and Patsy he says, ‘I should give you “robbing orchards” by right.’

Then he fell behind.

‘Look at him,’ says mother. ‘The good red skin is too much for him.’

We all looked back. Dad had his penknife out, peeling an apple.

# THE GUARDIAN: AN ULSTER STORY

---

JOHN HEWITT

WHEN we were telling this story over the other night there was a dispute about the right order that things happened in. Some contended that the child came first to Brockas, some said it was the dog. Which was first is not important, nor does it matter whether William Gault was at the Station in those days or his first cousin. The dispute was only because both parties felt that a story ought to keep the same shape always in the telling; and any difference suggests that it has not yet come to its final form. You can have plenty of differences in detail and alterations in stories of things which have happened recently. That's a sign and mark of their newness. But an old story, a story handed down by generations should not be tampered with. So I will tell you this, not maybe as I think it did happen, but as I remember it from the telling of an elderly man who heard it as a boy from an old woman who was in it at the time when she was a girl.

Brockas was a big three storey house with each of its high windows cut up into twelve little panes of glass. At one time coaches had turned on the gravel at the steps of the front door. But the last coach had come and gone not long after Mrs. Shaw was married, and now she was a frail old body of seventy or more, and a widow for nearly forty years. Vivian, the master, her only son, was no more than a cub of a lad, six years old maybe or seven, when his father died.

The great days of Brockas were over. Grass grew along the drive leaving only the ruts and slunks to shew the road through the trees; and many of these were taken away during a big war, when timber was fetching good prices. Instead of being a gentleman's place with its times and its seasons, Brockas became a big farm run in a throughother way by

a changeable headstrong woman and a line of quarrelsome foremen.

Even when Master Vivian came of age it continued like this, for he was as changeable as his mother, sometimes letting the land for grazing, sometimes trying stockraising himself in a grand style, sometimes ploughing far more than he could get laboured. There was hardly a field in it that did not shew the shadows of furrows under the ripplegrass and the rushes. But whichever way it was, there was a wheen of girls and servant men in it all the time: the girls in the house and the laundry and the dairy; the men running after the horses, for Mrs. Shaw had kept them on when her husband died and the Master grew up among their legs, and in all his changes never grew tired of them.

In the country you find that the only son of a managing woman usually stays single or, if he marries, marries some quiet slip his mother picked for him; one that would bring no trouble into the house and no insurrection. The Master was as headstrong as his mother, well, nearly as strong, for she took to her room at the latter end. Yet she never surrendered her grip on things; and many were the rows you could hear rumours of down in the kitchen, with him stamping across the boards and slamming doors. Still, he was over forty and single yet, although he was sound in every feature.

Now this is where I keep to the man's telling. One day a child was found in a barn outby, a baby boy lying in the straw. How he came there nobody knows till this day. Some say there were tinkers camping on the Fair Hill the day before. Some laid it to a girl that had left the house in the spring of the year, and held that maybe the Master might know the right way of it. Anyhow, he was for putting it on the Guardians, but Mrs. Shaw ordered that the child was to be kept. 'One more mouth will make no odds' was the report carried to the kitchen. And for a while the place was in an uproar with the scouring of tin baths, the boiling of water, the scalding of bowls, and the floastered doing of what a baby needs done. But this died down in time, and the child became a forgotten member of the household like an extra cat that is fed when somebody remembers.

In these days the Master was neither to hold nor to bind; his temper was fierce, his discourse, never very civil, reduced to cross words between sulky goings and roaring comings. Only the shuffle upstairs and the light tapping of the mistress' stick remained to shew that there was order and authority somewhere in the house.

Then one evening after the best day for a week, a quiet day, for he had gone to the Fair, the Master came home in the trap, full, and with him the dog, a bull-pup, the ugliest creature you ever saw, with a heavy bobbing head and big lugs and a black snout, and no legs worth speaking of. He had gone to the Fair alone, and none of the Brockas folk had seen the purchase made ; but Sandy, the Postman, reported that in the village they were saying that he paid a lock of money for the pup, and that he got him off a wee black-avised man with leather leggings that nobody had seen before.

In Brockas there was no call for such a beast. Dogs aye, but working dogs, the good running kind, to hurd the yowes through a slaap, or to bark the kibes off a tramp. So in the end it was generally agreed that the Master got him to feed and groom for a prize up in Dublin at the Big Show. For the Master was good and handy with animals and had come back with silver cups for more than one glittering mare. Be that as it may, his temper improved and folk grew less scared of him.

Now we come to the strange part of the story: for if the Master courted the pup with bits from his plate and soft words in a quiet voice and coaxing, the pup in turn gave all his love to the child. In the cold nights when the wee fellow was blae and whingeing, the pup would stagger in under the long table and turn over on his back, and the wee starved creature would crawl in after him and lie on the pup's soft belly and go to sleep. There they both would sleep, and the pup would be the first to open an eye, and he would still lie there with one eye open, and the child breathing steady and deep.

Years went by with little change; the crops would be good, or the oats would be a bit light, or a cow would calve, or the land was well let; and maybe, of an autumn, a great gale of wind would fell a beech; or some of the girls would get

married off, and servant men would go and others come; and once there was heavy snow lying in wreaths on the steps, and scores of queer birds picking round the causey that would hardly fly up when you went out to the pump with boiling water. The child was about four or five as near as you could guess, a wee crowl of a thing, and the dog, a big animal now by what it had been, of much the same age. But there was no sign of the Master entering for the Show, if he ever had that conceit. The mistress had taken to her bed for good, and the Master only went near her once or twice in the week. The only visitor, apart from men who would rarely come back on Fair Days with the Master, was the minister; and after the christening which took place within a week of the child's arrival at Brockas, and gave him the names of Thomas White, the choice of the mistress when they took the wee creature up to her room and she saw him first, after the christening the minister shewed no further concern for his immortal soul when he called for his annual visitation.

Once in the spring of the year, a mild day with the sowing well begun and some of the praties in, Thomas White went farther than usual, right down to the wee burn by the Station Road. The burn here is ten foot wide or more and full of the water drained off the Low Meadow. There was a plank across it; and Thomas White made it up in his mind to try for the far side. William Gault of the Station saw the whole narration, and he said that the plank was old and boast enough to drop if you skellied at it, and that nobody had crossed that way since he could mind except maybe some of the village boys of a Sunday for a wager. Thomas White had no knowledge of danger. William Gault was for shouting to stop him, but what he saw made him hold his breath. No sooner had the child set foot on the timber than Sorley, the bulldog, gave a lep out of the scroggery behind and had him fast by the skirt of his wee dress. Thomas White let out a cry and pulled against the grip, and then, when the dog would not yield, he turned, and, with a stick he was carrying, beat him sorely over the lugs and the flanks. But still the beast held on. And when William Gault got over the wall and round by the stone bridge at the bottom of the loanen, the contest was still

unabated. The child roaring, the stick lashing, and the bulldog back on his haunches at the top of the bru, still holding on. He only let go when William Gault lifted the child in his arms and set him safe in the middle of the field. Then William Gault went back to the burn and stuck the heel of his boot into the rotten end of the plank, and the whole thing fell asunder and floated away.

Nobody up at the house knew a single thing about all this until Sandy the Postman the next time he was up said to one of the girls, 'That was a near nick the cub had.' The Master heard of this, and when Sandy came again he was boarded to explain his story. And that brought William Gault into it. He was sent for, but instead of thanks for his trouble all he got was dog's abuse for not running to report it at the time. What with all the talk back and forward, and the interviewing and the statements and the strong words, there were those that held that an inquest or a day at the petty sessions would have been less bother and over sooner.

The wean got a thrashing for his part in it. But before the Master took a stick to him, he had Sorley locked up out of sight. Although the beating was indoors, the men in the yard said that you could hear the squavers and skreichs rising and falling with the blows, and with every cry Sorley's strap rattled and there was a thump against the door of the shed. If it had gone on much longer the strap would surely have been broken and the door levelled.

The friendship between the two was uncommon. Sorley was brother and sister to Thomas White, and sometimes you would have thought, watching the antics of them, that the dog was as old fashioned as the child. Wiser he was, no doubt, for time and again he kept the child out of detriment. At threshing, maybe, when the yard was full of engines and belts and men all anxious to have done in time; or again when the child be to rouse the stirks with a long rod.

The Master still had a great gragh for the animal and had none at all to spare for Thomas White. You might even say, with the child growing up and running about now, he got more into the Master's way and more on his nerves than when he lay in a kish among the peats. And Mrs. Shaw was

by this time too far through to give the wee creature a thought. Certainly she never asked for him to be brought up to her room as she did sometimes when he came to Brockas first, although she was known to inquire what the trouble was when the gowling from below took on dimension. The girls in the place were kind enough to him when it cost them little bother. But none of them went out of her way to be more than that. Likely because those that stayed the longest did not want their names remarked for over-friendliness that would start any clash; and the younger girls took the hint and let no great fondness grow. The men were better in their coarse way, for most men don't mind shewing cubs how to do things for they can shew off at whatever they are doing; but Thomas White was still too wee to understand or enjoy the making of a straw collar, tait by tait, or the cobbling of a broken plough, or even the yocking of a powney. So there was nobody left to him but the bulldog, and often Sorley was taken by the Master out and about the fields when he went to see to a stretch of fencing or the bushing of a slaap, or the mending of a spew, or maybe of a Sunday afternoon to go over the marches, while Thomas White was left to play alone, out in the causey if it was fine or in an out-building if it was teeming, for he was only allowed into the kitchen after it was dark.

Late on Christmas Eve the girls had all gone upstairs to get ready for the Midnight Mass, some of the men had gone home, or were down in the village, and those that were left were in the loft getting ready to go with the girls. The kitchen was redd up and spotless, the chairs drawn back to the walls and the table cleared. Thomas White sat on one of the hobs beside the ash-covered fire. He was not by himself, for Sorley was lying at the other side of the hearth.

Then suddenly the kitchen door was pushed open with a rush, and the Master stepped forward into the middle of the floor. He stood for a while without stirring, glowering at the boy: a big man, the Master, and wild hardy to look at.

Then he started across and bending over with a lifted hand gave Thomas White a rare box on the lug. The child gave a gulder and fell forward on to his knees. In a second Sorley was up on his legs, growling. The Master himself saw him,

grunted, and stepped back, his thick left forearm slanted across his throat, his right fist raised and clenched. Then without stopping to shake himself Sorley lept from the hearth. He struck the Master under the forearm, and down he went, giving one terrible scream as he fell, a scream that dinnelled the copperpans on the shelf, and was heard out in the loft, for the men there came running in without their coats. When they saw what was in it, one went for a grap and one got the shotgun from the hall-locker, and, coming back full pelt, levelled the barrels and fired first one, then the other. Only with the second did Sorley let go and roll over stiff on the floor.

They kept the girls out of the kitchen till after the doctor had gone. Then when they had carried the Master's body into the parlour and stretched it on the table and put a sheet over it, the girls were let in. And that was the end of Vivian Shaw of Brockas, a hardy end to a hardy man.

Mrs. Shaw never got over it. The whole place seemed full of freets and scarce a girl would stay till the finish, and the men themselves were not over anxious. So when Mrs. Shaw was buried too and the lawyer read what was written, a strange gentleman took Thomas White away in his trap to the station. And there was an auction of the stock and implements in the yard, and of the furniture on the premises, and the two or three that were in it to the end got their month's wages.

Thomas Shaw White, we heard tell, when he was sixteen, went out to the East India Company and lived there for years, and made a great name for himself at the soldiering: but he was never known to come next nor near Brockas again, nor have correspondence with anybody in the country. None of the men or girls ever caught sight of him in later years, for those that crossed water all went to America or Glasgow. It was a piece in the paper at the time of the old Queen's Jubilee that gave the only word we ever had of him.

If you go to Brockas now you would hardly know the place, for there is a fine snug dwelling house built where they cleared the trees, and the big bare house at the back has swallows dipping and lipping in and out of the broken windows, and long grass is growing out of the only length of spouting that is left.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

TERESA DEEVY was born in Waterford, of Kilkenny-born parents, and educated at the Ursuline Convent and National University. She has had several plays produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin; some published by Macmillan and some produced in London and New York. Interested in radio work, has broadcast and televised. She now lives in Dublin.

R. M. FOX, born in Leeds of Anglo-Irish parentage, spent his early years in London. He worked as youth in engineering workshops. Won National Co-operative Scholarship, spent three years at Ruskin College, Oxford, where he took the Diploma of Economics and Political Science. His books include *The Triumphant Machine*, *Drifting Men*, *Smoky Crusade* (autobiography), *Rebel Irishwomen*, *Green Banners*, *History of the Irish Citizen Army*, *James Connolly: The Forerunner*. A Dublin dramatic critic he has written on the Irish theatre for Irish, English, U.S., and Continental journals.

ROBERT GREACEN was born, 1920, in N. Ireland, studied Social Science at Dublin University. A poet, critic, journalist and editor, he has contributed to British and Irish publications. His most recent book of poems, *The Undying Day*, was published by the Falcon Press in 1948. He is co-editor of the forthcoming Faber anthology, *Contemporary Irish Poetry*, and his selection of Maria Edgeworth's letters will appear this year from the Grey Walls Press.

SAM HARRISON, born Co. Armagh 1920 (Ph.D. from Trinity College, Dublin) has contributed to various Irish periodicals and to the anthology *Irish Harvest*, edited by Greacen. He is married and now lives in Geneva.

JOHN HEWITT was born in Belfast, 1907. He is Keeper of Art Division, Belfast Museum and Art Gallery, and has lectured, broadcast, written art and literary criticism and short stories. His verse has appeared in many periodicals and anthologies. *No Rebel Word* (poems) was published in 1948. The sponsor of Ulster Regionalism.

PATRICIA HUTCHINS, born Ardnagashel, Bantry, was educated in England. She has contributed to various British and Irish periodicals, broadcasts, and is interested in documentary,

#### NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

films. Her study, *James Joyce's Dublin*, will be published this year by the Grey Walls Press.

VALENTIN IREMONGER, born in Dublin 1918, works for the Irish Foreign Service and is at present private secretary to the Minister of External Affairs. In 1945 he won AE Memorial Award, given every five years for 'the best literary work, either creative or scholarly by an Irish writer under 35'. The award was in respect of an unpublished volume of poems, *Reservations*.

SEÁN JENNETT, works for a London publishing house, where he specializes in book design and typography. Faber and Faber have published two volumes of his verse, *Always Adam*, and *The Cloth of Flesh*.

MICHAEL LUCEY was born in Kinsale, Co. Cork, 1926. He was in the Irish Army during the War years and now in R.A.S.C., stationed at Bulford, nr. Salisbury. His first three stories to be published appeared in *Irish Writing*. He is now writing a play.

ROY MCFADDEN, born in Belfast 1921, now lives in Lisburn; a solicitor by profession, he has published three books of poetry, the last of which was *The Heart's Townland*. He respects Yeats, admires AE and owes allegiance to Blake.

MICHAEL MCCLAVERTY was born Monaghan, 1907. Now a schoolmaster, teaching and living in Belfast. He has published four novels and is working on a fifth. A volume of short stories is due shortly from Cape.

DAVID MARCUS; (1924) read in Cork and Dublin for the Bar and took degree in 1945. He is co-editor, with Terence Smith, of *Irish Writing* and editor of *Poetry Ireland*. He has had poetry and short stories published in Ireland and Britain.

EWART MILNE; born 1903 in Dublin, where he went to Christ Church Cathedral School. He has had a roving career, including sailing before the mast, and fighting on Loyalist side in Spanish War. He is a contributor to British and Irish publications and has published five books of verse: three in Ireland, and two—*Jubilo* and *Boding Day*—in London. Married, he is at present living in Essex.

MICHAEL O'BEIRNE, born in Dublin, 1910, says of himself: 'Education (continuing) in the University of Life has

#### NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

yielded passes in gate-making, selling, labouring, editing women's weekly, being a temporary civil servant. Now in jewellery business. Writes little, publishes less. Ambition: integrity. Disability: anxiety to be popular.'

W. R. RODGERS, a Belfastman, formerly a Non-conformist clergyman, is now a script-writer with the B.B.C. in London. His *Awake! and Other Poems* was published by Secker and Warburg.

BLANAIID SALKELD was born at Chittagong, India (now Pakistan), of Irish parents. She has published three books of verse. Her verse play, *Scarecrow Over the Corn*, was produced by the Dublin Drama League in 1941. She contributes to various Irish periodicals and is mother of the artist, Cecil ffrench Salkeld.

JOHN D. STEWART, a civil engineer in Belfast was born in 1917: He has published short stories and has written feature programmes for N. Ireland B.B.C.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

---

THE SHORT STORY. SEAN O'FAOLAIN. Collins. 10s. 6d. net. The short story as a cult, as a craft, as a novelist's sideline—even as a straightforward literary form—has led to many gyrations among modern critics. Mr. O'Faolain, perhaps best known as an accomplished and spirited practitioner of the form, has hustled into the fray determined (very nearly) to have the last word; he arms himself with an array of illustration and quotation, held together by a firm cement of Cork blarney. Fortunately he has not attempted a textbook; there is no underlying pretence that this ten-and-sixpence worth of analysis and assessment will ensure the amateur a steady income—or a reputation—from either the little reviews or the 'glossies'.

The plan of this discursive study is not hard-and-fast, for there are occasional overlappings. In the main, Mr. O'Faolain surveys three modern masters—Daudet, Chekov, and de Maupassant—before plunging into those seldom-charted technical depths he has called, for convenience, subject, convention, construction, and language. A happy and novel idea is the inclusion of eight complete stories—the newer masters include Frank O'Connor, Elizabeth Bowen, and Ernest Hemingway—which are dissected with sympathy, yet with an overall detachment.

Now Sean O'Faolain does not restrict himself to views on the short story—ah, he would argue, since the story is of necessity nearer to life than life itself; one cannot properly be irrelevant—but digresses at will, making here and there comments that he must long have itched to release. Two samples—

... the English mind tends, of its nature, to the sturdy belief that personal integrity is one of those things that looks after itself, or is attended to at school, and if not then nothing more can be done about it.

The short story, then, is an immense confidence trick, an immense illusion, as immense a technical achievement as the performance

of an adept magician. But there is no deception, or rather, the illusion here depends on our always knowing how it is done.

Personality is the mainspring, Mr. O'Faolain continually suggests, behind a Chekov or a Daudet or a Frank O'Connor; cultivate your personality, keep your eyes and ears open, be honest—and the technical problems, at first overwhelming, will solve themselves.

Sean O'Faolain, like most of the Irish story-writers, has been profoundly influenced by the Russians—in his case, particularly Chekov and Turgenev. It is not surprising that his essay on Chekov is the most satisfying unit in the book; he brings to the man and his work an understanding that lights up the several Chekov stories considered. Chekov indeed would seem the ideal for an imaginative writer—sympathetic yet critically-minded, individual in the extreme yet socially aware, clinically accurate yet seeing beyond the physical outline to the intangible but true centre.

English and Irish minds, dissimilar as they are, while conceding the enormous skill of de Maupassant, for example, can love Chekov; Mr. O'Faolain stands ready with some of the reasons. For his study of Chekov alone, *The Short Story* must be placed among the notable critical works of 1948.

ROBERT GREACEN

KEVIN O'HIGGINS. TERENCE DE VERE WHITE. Methuen.  
18s.

KEVIN O'HIGGIN's murder in 1927 in Dublin was the not-altogether-unexpected culmination of a brief and fiery passage across the political scene. No one perhaps more successfully embodied the confusions and dilemmas of the Irish National Revolution—all the more because he was in no way a political thinker, indeed was not a thinker in any sense at all. His amateurishness is the hallmark of the whole immature political arena in which he became a leading performer.

Born in 1892, a smalltown doctor's son, he was educated for the priesthood; but his reckless inability to abstain from practical jokes ended his priestly career, and he was rather at a loss what to do. While he was at University College, the

1914 war broke out. The powerful oration made by Pearse at an old Irish patriot's grave stirred him, as it did many others, and drew him into the Republican fight. The attempt to impose conscription on Ireland in 1918 quickened resistance, and one of the random acts of the general repression was to put him into jail and make a resolved politician out of him. In the Belfast concentration-camp the Sinn Feiners had the chance to plan organization and O'Higgins on his release stood for Dail election.

Mr. De Vere White tells the story of the long wrangle over the Treaty with much interesting detail. He does his best to remain impartial, though a mildly liberal dislike of the hurlyburly of those tangled days makes itself discreetly felt. He takes his subject seriously as a Great Man: a judgment which I do not think that history will sustain. 'A figure from the antique cast in bronze,' said Churchill, in his imposing maladroit phrase-making; for O'Higgins was simply of his age, with no rumours of antiquity anywhere about him, and was far too improvised a character to be thought of as cast in anything. There is much interest in his story, but it is not that of a Plutarchean Hero.

Mr. De Vere White's book deserves welcome for two reasons. First, there are sound reasons for raking up the whole episode of the Black and Tans, even in such polite terms as those of Mr. De Vere White's. For our national conscience should not be allowed to brush it aside as brusquely as it has. Here after all was the first try-out of fascist methods—incidentally devising the euphemism of 'Shot while escaping' for the murder of prisoners: the formula later used by Hitler. And so the matter is one which should be honestly kept in mind when abstractions such as Western Democracy are so crudely the fashion.

Secondly, there is the interest of O'Higgins himself. There are many likeable elements in the character of this dutiful though horseplaying son of the Church; and yet, precisely because of his total unlikeness to the Plutarchean bronze, there are vicious opportunist elements. His basic inability to understand in the least what was happening in his world lends his personality at moments a ramshackle cynicism and

brutality—he hits out like an angry child, like a person in a dream, and later notices the blood. Gradually the taken-for-granted earth falls away in a nasty smell and conventional political compromise.

Yet the shrewd unimplicated eye keeps on taking quick and ruthless glances at the 'great scene' on which the smalltown boy has somehow irrupted. Thus he wrote after visiting Geneva:

... while there is unlimited lip-service to idealism and abundant use of such terms as 'Justice', 'Truth,' 'Right,' etc., a crafty imperialism can breathe quite freely the atmosphere of the Salle de la Reformation and here as elsewhere 'God is on the side of the big battalions'. Lord Robert Cecil is the finest flower of Geneva. He has an episcopal manner, he exudes High Church morality, his eyes look through you into a better world. He is a useful type to the British—the 'sword and Bible' type. His sanctimonious exterior conceals an utterly cynical, ruthless, cold-hearted imperialism. He is the High Priest of Humbug and Hypocrisy. Amery is here to assert his inalienable and indefensible right to Mosul and to protest his unwillingness (*sic*) to carry on the 'white man's burden' in any corner of the globe—and Austen—the stage Englishman—monocled, stupid, and successful.

But there was no central idea to give coherence to the love of Ireland which Pearse's mystical words had fired. We seem to see at moments in his aspiring and derelict soul the very breakdown of an internal system, where the first forms of a new organisation are sketched out but cannot hold together. That is why he stands out excellently as the confused soul of Ireland at this difficult moment of change, vindicating its right to a free nationhood but owning no concept of man able to give depth to that freedom, to release new levels of stable union.

And that is why there is a remorseless logic in his end, a tragic and yet farcical inevitability. As a result of his contact with the Great World which he described with such cold canniness, he hatched in London the fantasy of solving the Irish problem by having King George V crowned in Dublin as King of Ireland. Then, returning to Ireland, he was murdered within forty-eight hours. In his last moments he

achieves a genuine dignity, as if the baffled heroic element, no longer responsible for a solution in terms of social reality, could retire in upon its own simple essences. He goes consciously to his death, reading Stephen Gwynn's *Song of Despair*, and becomes Ireland at last, at the moment when he no longer has any part to play except a mythical one.

The more one looks back on those Irish days, so close in time and yet already cut off as a past period, the larger grows the stature of the one truly great man, James Connolly. Not a man cast in any metal, not slapdashed in O'Higgins' warm clay, but a man with the quick of personal and national life in him. Some day Ireland will climb again to the high moment defined by his life and thought, and O'Higgins will then be got into proper perspective.

JACK LINDSAY

TARRY FLYNN. PATRICK KAVANAGH. The Pilot Press.  
8s. 6d.

WHEN Mr. Kavanagh published his poem *The Great Hunger* in 1942, it was confiscated by the police and he was threatened with prosecution. I have not seen it; but this novel of his, obviously autobiographical in part, makes me feel that it must have been good enough to warrant the attention it provoked with its picture of a small-farming Irish community. *Tarry Flynn* is not entirely successful as a work of art. There is a certain clash between the objective satirical approach, scathing and yet warm with a good love of life, and the personal note which seeks to define a poet's youth in the peasant world. I feel that Tarry the cautious country-lad is not always quite coincident with Tarry the earth-loving poet. But having made this slight criticism, I can go on to express my simple admiration of the book. There is vitality, a sharp edge of scorn and yet an intense delightedness. The effect is perfect when Mr. Kavanagh is solely concerned with Tarry the amorous dead-scared lad who knows that the moment he falls into the open lap of one of the girls he is trapped for life. His evasions and anguishes are finely rendered. I can think only of A. E. Coppard's *The Higgler* as giving just this

## FABER BOOKS

**The Meaning of Human Existence** LESLIE PAUL

The author of that remarkable study *The Annihilation of Man* shows the working-out of his spiritual cure for society's ills. "I found so much food for thought in it."—John Betjeman: *Daily Herald*. 16/-

**Selected Poems**

EZRA POUND

*Introduction by T. S. ELIOT*

The earlier poems up to and including *Mauberley*. 12/6

**Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature** J. F. DANBY

"The rare phenomenon of a truly creative criticism has restored Shakespeare his true stature."—*Time and Tide*. 16/-

**Wordsworth**

HERBERT READ

"One of the most important works of criticism of our time."—*The Times Lit. Supp.* *New and revised edition*. 15/-

HEFFER  
OF CAMBRIDGE

for BOOKS on  
ALL SUBJECTS

English and Foreign  
New and Secondhand

*Catalogues issued*

Buyers of Fine, Rare,  
and Scholarly Books

*The Bookshop  
known the world over*

W. HEFFER & SONS, LTD.,  
PETTY CURY

CAMBRIDGE

*The  
Undying Day*

poems by

ROBERT GREACEN

"There are good things in  
this volume, genuine feeling,  
telling lines and poems that  
stir the attention."—*Belfast  
Telegraph*.

7s. 6d. net.

THE FALCON PRESS

aspect of the shrewd peasant, and Mr. Kavanagh comes out well from the comparison.

In Mrs. Flynn there is no confusion of motive, and she emerges as a vivid fullsize character of the sort that any self-respecting novelist would sell his boots to create. The persistence in her of something reckless, wholly on the side of life, despite the deep and twisting fears of the peasant, the mingled acceptance and defiance of the world: all this is beautifully expressed. By his direct lyric gift, allied to a hearty sense of character, Mr. Kavanagh has brought something new to a theme which has been well worked over, that of the priest-ridden Irish village with its crushing boredoms and frustrations. His book is as fresh as a daisy, an unusual event in our grey literary soil. It aptly reminds us that after all, in art as in life, an ounce of clear merriment is worth several tons of indecisive gloom.

JACK LINDSAY

THE VOLUNTEER EARL, BEING THE LIFE AND  
TIMES OF JAMES CAULFIELD, FIRST EARL OF  
CHARLEMONT. MAURICE JAMES CRAIG. Cresset Press.  
18s.

CHARLEMONT is mainly remembered for having built the Casino at Clontarf, quarrelled with the artist Piranesi, and appeared with his large snouted face in Reynold's caricature of Raphael's *School of Athens*. Mr. Craig has made him a subject of some significance by linking him with various aspects of eighteenth-century history: art-patronage in general and the role of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy at this phase of evolving Irish nationhood. The scholarship of the book is thorough—though it is irritating to read sentences like that about a letter to a mistress 'signed with an embarrassingly infantile pet-name' which we are not given. We are not so easily embarrassed nowadays, and at the end of the story we still need a little more light on the element of melancholy that made the Earl sexually diffident, despite his list of mistresses, gave him the correct taste for solitude, and broke him down as an orator.

But Mr. Craig shows clearly how the plundering military landlords of the Elizabethan conquest turned, in the eighteenth

**Over the Reefs**

ROBERT GIBBINGS

*With 85 wood engravings by the  
Irish author-artist*

'A wonderful blend of legends, good *tourisme*, incredible anecdotes, and graphic description.' DESMOND HAWKINS (*The New Statesman*). 15s. net

*Other Books by Robert Gibbings*

SWEET THAMES RUN SOFTLY  
With 50 wood engravings. 15s. net

COMING DOWN THE WYE  
With 62 wood engravings. 15s. net

LOVELY IS THE LEE  
With 60 wood engravings. 15s. net

BLUE ANGELS AND WHALES  
With 67 illustrations from the  
author's drawings. 12s. 6d. net

**The Mad O'Haras**

PATRICIA LYNCH

*Illustrated by Elizabeth Rivers*

A new, long story for children. 'Sparkling with Irish sun and rain, and goes as lightly as a jaunting car.' MARY CROSBIE in *John O'London's*. 8s. 6d. net

*Other Books by Patricia Lynch*

THE TURF-CUTTER'S DONKEY; THE TURF-CUTTER'S DONKEY GOES VISITING; THE GREY GOOSE OF KILNEVIN; FIDDLER'S QUEST; LONG EARS. Each 7s. 6d. net. KING OF THE TINKERS. 8s. 6d. net. A STORYTELLER'S CHILDHOOD. 10s. 6d. net.

DENT

AN AWARD PUBLICATION  
FOR A LONG POEM OF WORLD SIGNIFICANCE

***Lost Edition by Lillian Everts***

Issued by The Lantern—in brochure form. A limited edition which, in the opinion of The Lantern Judges, will eventually become a collectors' item.

FROM PROFESSOR ROBERT HILLYER.  
"Your poem, *Lost Edition*, has a direct, folk quality; a combination of allegory and ruggedness, which makes it as powerful as a nightmare. It has real terror in it, the kind that ought to do some good."

FROM LOUIS UNTERMAYER: "*Lost Edition* is highly imaginative and vivid. Its figures are quick and kaleidoscopic. It moves with a vivacity speeded up by the staccato rhymes, and helped by the repetitions. It carries its message—man's ingenuity in self-destruction—without prodding or preaching."

Autographed Brochures are being sold at one dollar; and in accordance with an arrangement made by Lillian Everts with The American Red Cross Service for the Blind, total proceeds from sale of 500 Prize copies will go to them.

*Brochures can be obtained directly from  
LILLIAN EVERTS AT 187 HICKS STREET, BROOKLYN 2, NEW YORK.*

century, at least among certain sections, to an aristocracy with something of national consciousness, who played their part in building modern Ireland. Charlemont was the outstanding example of this trend, and for a while seemed moving to a position of national leadership. He was associated with the patriotic movement around Grattan's Parliament, and he could claim to have put Grattan himself into politics. But old age saved him from having to face out the contradictions of being an Anglo-Irish landlord with sympathy for national aspirations; he escaped having to make a choice at the insurrectionary end of the century, and died just before the destruction of the Irish Parliament.

These important political relations are given vitality by the extent to which he entered into the general vanguard of eighteenth century developments. His manuscript travel-journal of 1749-50, drawn on extensively by Mr. Craig, is a valuable document, to be ranked high among the records which show an early romantic curiosity gaining strength from acquaintance with the Eastern Mediterranean. Here we see the classical world being rediscovered as romantic (e.g. the Scylla and Charybdis of the Straits of Messina seen as a 'romantick perpendicular Rock'); and the advent of a new sense of detachment. Asking 'Who are the real barbarians?', Charlemont reconsiders the compulsory drinking of Dublin dinners and the fashion that makes him powder his hair with flour; he collects French versions of Turkish poetry and cites three love-songs; he investigates the matrilineal society on Lesbos and later reads a paper on it to the Royal Irish Academy. And he himself comes out as a pleasant fellow, beating the philosopher Hume for a countess's love at Turin, dancing Greek dances with country girls in the *Ægean*, visiting a Turkish 'Temple of Love' for strictly sociological reasons, and then returning for 'perhaps something more'. He speculates on future travellers 'perhaps from America' visiting the Ruins of London.

He thus appears as highly sensitive to the vanguard trends of his day, aware of new energies and of tremblings underground; and this romantic aspect of his interests shows up on the political side in a sturdy belief that the people 'never do

## HARRAP APRIL SELECTIONS

### *A Norfolk Diary*

This is the diary of an intelligent, educated and observant country parson who moved widely in country society and literary, political and clerical circles during the latter half of the 19th century. His keen sense of news and vivid commentaries combine to make this work a readable and discerning survey. Edited by his grandson, the **REV. H. B. J. ARMSTRONG** (price 10s. 6d. net) and illustrated with 3 half-tone plates.

### *Hendrik Van Loon*

Admirers of the work of the late Hendrik Van Loon will be pleased to learn that reprints of two of his most famous works, **THE STORY OF MANKIND** (10s. 6d. net) and the **LIVES** (18s. net), both illustrated by the author, are again available. They are rich introductions to his genius for making biography and history into pulsating, living subjects.

### *The Holborn Library*

**THE PICKWICK PAPERS** is the latest addition to the *Holborn library* of attractively designed and artistically produced editions of the classics, volumes of which have won high commendation. *Series price 6s. net per volume*

GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD

wrong but with just cause'. But he lacks the driving force to face the full consequences of his tastes and creeds, and so he stays a dilettante in both art and politics.

Mr. Craig has new material on the quarrel with Piranesi; but fails to find evidence which would clarify Charlemont's attitudes. He deals also at length with the building work which made Charlemont the introducer of new sensitive elegancies into Ireland. The Casino still stands as his monument: a building some 70 feet square and 50 feet in height, a Greek cross in plan, so deftly scaled as to appear quite small—and with its italicized Roman Doric so gracefully controlled as to seem quite chaste. After a chequered history (in which its galleries were used by Michael Collins for machine-gun practice) it was taken over under the Ancient Monuments Act of 1930.

Of the first building, at Marino, a sort of Gothic extravaganza set among moss-houses, rustic hermitages, rural alcoves, and an oriental cafe-house, Mr. Craig says that it 'came to be known, why it is not clear, as "Rosamund's Bower"'. This term must be used to express a maze of some sort. (Matthews, in his book on Labyrinths, takes Rosamund's Bower as a maze: chapter xix.) A common name in England for mazes was Julian's Bower, Gilling Bore, Julaher's Barrow, etc.; but though I cannot find Rosamund as a place-name, the meaning cannot be doubted. Exactly how it became attached to Marino is more difficult to say; but it is possible that the mosaic floor had a maze-design, as in so many medieval cathedrals—or the general complication of forms may have been enough to warrant the name.

JACK LINDSAY

THE COURSE OF IRISH VERSE. ROBERT FARREN.  
Sheed and Ward. 8s. 6d.; VACANT POSSESSION.  
WALTER MACKEN. Macmillan. 6s.

THE purpose of Mr. Farren's study is 'to show . . . the course of Irish poetry in the English language; to observe and remark upon the growth in Irishness, in separate existence from

# UNWIN

## The White Pony

*An anthology of Chinese Poetry from the earliest times to the present day*

*Edited by ROBERT PAYNE.* This is the first collection of Chinese poetry to have been translated by a group of Chinese scholars, each poem being translated by the man best qualified to interpret it. *16s. net*

## William Cowper

*and the Eighteenth Century*

*GILBERT THOMAS.* This brilliant life of the poet deals fully with him in relation to his times and particularly with the dominant influence in his life—the Evangelical revival. ‘A work of enduring value.’—*Spectator.* *2nd edition. 16s. net*

## No Roads Go By

*MYRTLE WHITE.* For seven years Mrs White lived with her family in the remote ‘back-blocks’ of the South Australian desert. Her story is a memorable record of modern pioneering. *8s. 6d. net*

## Not into Clean Hands

*LOUIS PAUWELS.* *Translated by BERNARD MIALL.* A moving and sensitive first novel by the most notable French writer to have arisen since the war. *7s. 6d. net*

## Fienka

*VLADIMIR KRYMOV.* *Translated by MALCOLM BURR.* This vivid unusual novel tells of Bourgeois family life in nineteenth century Riga. *12s. 6d. net*

---

*George Allen and Unwin Ltd*

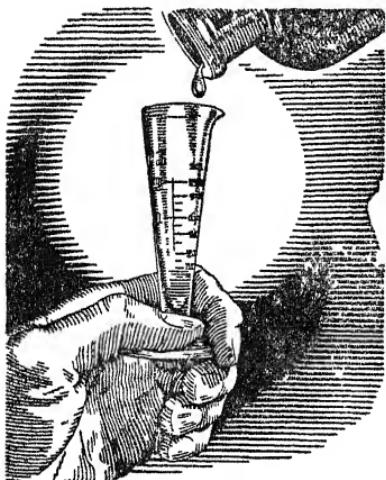
English poetry, of the poetry that was and is composed in Ireland by Irishmen.'

Mr. Farren favours literary separatism, 'not because it is separatism, but because it is the habit of all healthy nations.' One wishes that he had expanded this; for at times he tends to stress the mode of a poem at the expense of its content. His study of Ferguson, for instance, pays too little attention to the subject matter of the longer poems. An accent is of little account unless it has a native way of life behind it. Joseph Campbell was a minor poet largely because he borrowed a literary mode from the past and imposed it on his work instead of striking poetry from his own time.

Mr. Farren begins dutifully with Goldsmith, Swift, and Sheridan, and does what he can with them; he listens for the Gaelic accent in the *Melodies* of Moore, who, in Shaw's words, turned the wild Irish harp into a drawing-room music-box; and he draws attention to the characteristic long 'wavering line' of Callanan: 'and the birds go to sleep by the sweet, wild twist of her song.'

Preliminaries over, he examines the work of the nineteenth-century poets with a shrewd eye. His account of Mangan is excellent; he makes one aware not only of Mangan's fitful genius but also of his metrical skill and variety, his subtle use of the refrain, his anticipation of Yeats in the use of proper names in his poetry, and his invaluable aid in the translation of Gaelic poetry. Without Mangan, the *Nation* poets would have been merely a group of patriotic versifiers. It is perhaps a tribute to him that his *Dark Rosaleen* was once broadcast by the B.B.C. as a love-poem.

William Allingham, who 'wanted the girls of Donegal who spun by half-doors and sang, to sing his words and not know who made them', was among the first of the Irish poets writing in English to consider seriously using the words of the people in poetry. Among the best of his poems are his remodelling of ballads which he took from the people and gave back as poetry. One tends to agree with Mr. Farren that, had his Irish background coloured his mind more vividly than his pre-Raphaelite connections, he might have preceded Yeats as the master-builder. But that rôle was left to Yeats,



RHEUMATISM?

TO RELIEVE

THE PAIN

Get BELTONA!



For many years BELTONA Brand Lotion has brought swift and soothing relief to countless thousands of sufferers from this distressing complaint. Invaluable also in cases of Lumbago, Sciatica, Neuritis, Fibrositis, Sprains, etc.

**BELTONA  
LOTION**

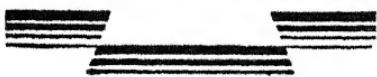
*From Chemists everywhere 2/9½, 4/0½, 6/6½  
Including Purchase Tax.*

THE pharmacist insists on accuracy. Take a "drop" of liquid, for instance. The gravity-formed "drop" can vary in size, so he uses the "minim" measure shown here. This extreme accuracy is essential when measuring potent fluid medicaments, of which the prescribed dose may be only one or two minimis. Long practice and skilled training make the pharmacist a stickler for accuracy—and for quality in the goods that he dispenses and recommends. The pharmacist's advice is always sound.

A PARKE-DAVIS PRODUCT.

*Ask his opinion of*

**Euthymol  
TOOTH PASTE**



**"By Plane  
and Pony  
in Haiti"**

will be the subject  
of a special article  
by the Editor in the  
**JUNE ISSUE**  
of

**LIFE & LETTERS**

who 'tweaked the ear of the world and made it turn towards Ireland, to listen to himsclf, and in some degree to his company.'

And Yeats, of course, upsets the apple-cart; for Yeats is nothing if he is not individual; and, in him, style is the blade of speech, the edge of his utterance. Yeats made great poetry out of modern Ireland and created a mythology from living people and events. There is more Yeats than Ireland in his poetry; and Mr. Farren seems to be worried by that fact.

And A.E.—'the Orangeman from Portadown'—worries Mr. Farren, too. A.E., we are told, is 'un-Irish in suffering through his spiritual perception a dimming of the sensuous world'; but he returns to the fold, strangely enough, through an equation of pantheistic earth-worship with the peasant's hunger for land. Mr. Farren is not at ease with Irish Protestants.

He is more at home with Campbell, Higgins, and Clarke; and on these poets he has written excellent essays. The painstaking examination of Austin Clarke's work is welcomed; and the brilliant analysis of Clarke's use of assonance will be instructive to many of the younger Irish poets and will send some of us back to Larminie's essay on the development of English metre.

But when all is said, the poets with something to say break the rules, and with these Mr. Farren is least happy. The Gaelic background is only a part of Ireland, and Mr. Farren's unawareness of Ulster poetry—and in particular the working-class poetry of the last century which was alive with social comment—is perhaps symptomatic. The book abounds with the words *Irish*, *Irishry*, and *Irishise*. But they are meaningless until we agree on a definition of *Ireland*.

In *Vacant Possession* Mr. Macken, author of the successful play *Mungo's Mansion*, lifts a strong voice against social injustice—but the accent, though it be of Galway, reminds us of Mr. O'Casey. The plot revolves round a group of squatters, their taking possession of a derelict house in Galway, the death of one of them and the imprisonment of another, and the ultimate eviction of the survivors. The outstanding character of the play is Fixit; at times one wonders how much

# *She's So Thankful For RELIEF FROM INDIGESTION!*

Another Tribute To  
**MACLEAN BRAND STOMACH POWDER**

Manchester

Dear Sirs,

I wish to thank you for giving me relief from stomach pains through your wonderful stomach powder. I cannot tell you how fine it is to be free from pain.

Yours thankfully,  
(Sgd.) Mrs. M. F.

Another Indigestion sufferer finds relief! Such letters of praise for Maclean Brand Stomach Powder are convincing evidence of its efficacy in relieving Heartburn, Flatulence, Nausea and Stomach Pains due to Indigestion. Why not start taking Maclean Brand Stomach Powder yourself and find the same measure of grateful relief from your Indigestion.

**MACLEAN  
Brand  
Stomach  
Powder**

*Alex. C. Maclean*

Maclean Brand Stomach Powder

Price 2/10 and 6/8.

Also in Tablet Form

Maclean Brand Stomach Tablets

Price 1/8 & 2/10 and in  
Handy Pocket Pack 10d.

*Only genuine if signed—  
"ALEX. C. MACLEAN"*

he draws from our recollections of O'Casey. The final curtain falls on Fixit's denunciation of the men pulling down the old building. 'Let ye give great shouts outa ye because yeer knockin' the props from under democracy, and it'll fall like a corpse under the foundation a the Galway Ganthry. Democracy? How are yeh!'

Mr. Farren's Irishry rarely asks that question. Mr. Macken constantly does; but they have yet to come to more serious questions beginning with *why*.

Roy McFADDEN

AN IRISH EMIGRANT'S FAREWELL. SEAN O'CASEY.

Macmillan. 16s.

HERE is a born fighter's fourth autobiographical book—the fight against English rule in Ireland of the Black-and-Tan period, the fight of a lonely Socialist during the Irish Civil War, the unending fight against the prudery and narrowness of the Dublin théâtre public. And the book is naturally written in an aggressive, heightened prose that borders near to poetry; O'Casey's real poetry comes forth when he ceases to rant and to thump the tenement table, when he is being too devastatingly sincere to wallow in the purple puddle.

O'Casey's wounds still smart—as James Joyce's smarted all his life—from the bitterness and frustration to which so many Irish writers are exposed. Much evidence exists in this volume and elsewhere of that compound of malice and envy which is nurtured in a specially vicious form among the *literati* of Dublin's fair (or foul) city. The dominant literary group in each successive period demands allegiance—subservience rather—from every significant new writer; and, if he stands up against their demand, they will try to smash him by open attack, secret plot, and private innuendo.

It is unfortunate that O'Casey, while frequently lambasting genuine humbug and ignorance, should have launched an offensive against the memory of George Russell (AE), for according to most factual accounts available, his encouragement of the young was as disinterested as one can reasonably expect from even the finest human being. Yeats and Lady Gregory emerge from the narrative as figures on the grand

# IRELAND'S leading literary magazines . . .

## I. IRISH WRITING

Edited by David Marcus and Terence Smith.

## 2. POETRY IRELAND

Edited by David Marcus

Founded to present the best work in contemporary Irish letters, these periodicals have set and maintained a standard that has been welcomed by both public and critics.

Their contributors are drawn from both world-famous and new Irish writers at home and abroad and have included Sean O'Casey, Padraic Colum, James Stephens, Liam O'Flaherty, Frank O'Connor, Sean O'Faolain, Mary Lavin, Michael McLaverty, Patrick Kavanagh, Oliver St. John Gogarty, Shane Leslie, Lord Longford, Louis MacNeice, C. Day Lewis, Lord Dunsany, E. C. Somerville and Martin Ross, Jim Phelan, Ewart Milne, Donagh MacDonagh, Norah Hoult, Bryan MacMahon, Mervyn Wall, Robert Greacen, Valentin Tremonger, Sean Jennett, and others.

In *Irish Writing* and *Poetry Ireland* you will be reading stories, poems, articles, and reviews of recent books by some of the outstanding names in contemporary Irish and World-literature.

BUT—owing to Board of Trade restrictions they can be obtained in Britain by subscription only.

## SO SUBSCRIBE NOW

**IRISH WRITING** : 1s. 7½d. *Quarterly*: 6s. 6d.  
Yearly (Post incl.)

**POETRY IRELAND**: 2s. 1d. *Quarterly*: 8s. 6d.  
Yearly (Post incl.)

TO: 15 ADELAIDE STREET, CORK, EIRE

**ADVANCE ANNOUNCEMENT** : The June issue of *Poetry Ireland* will be devoted to a new translation by Lord Longford of the famous Irish poem, *The Midnight Court*.

scale; he can discover no major fissures in their respective myths.

The full brunt of the offensive—large chunks of the book are modelled on the lines of a military campaign—falls on the Roman Catholic Church; for altar and biretta there can be no semblance of mercy. He writes at length and in full fury of ‘the Maynooth of squinting windows’ and heaps lavish scorn on Catholic shrines such as Lourdes—‘God’s gift of penicillin is worth ten thousand Lourdes.’ (It is well for him that he now lives on the tolerant banks of the Dart!) He hacks in blind frenzy at the branches, but too often neglects to saw quietly at the roots of clerical reaction.

Yet despite the defects—defects in a person who has wrestled desperately against poverty, near-blindness, religious narrowness—the genius of the man burns in passage after passage. One should do well to smile at the obvious rhodomontade, without allowing it to cloud appreciation of a writer who frequently sees steadily and with passionate sympathy the components in human behaviour; that, after all, is why O’Casey is a great dramatist.

HENRY McCREA

CONTEMPORARY IRISH POETRY. Edited by ROBERT GREACEN and VALENTIN IREMONGER. Faber. 8s. 6d.

This book arrived when we were in proof, too late for us to do more than welcome its publication. The editors have confined themselves to living poets (with the exception of Captain John Gallen, who was killed after the selection was made), and their aim has been ‘to present a cross-section of poetry written by Irishmen since the death of W. B. Yeats in 1939’. In addition to Austin Clarke, Cecil Day Lewis, Robert Graves, Louis MacNeice, it introduces several younger writers not previously published in England. It is a worthy successor to the selection of Welsh and Scottish verse already published by this firm.

R. H.

## SOME RECENT PRESS OPINIONS of

### “LIFE AND LETTERS”

now in its Fourteenth Year under the Editorship of Robert Herring

AUGUST, 1948 “Mr. Norman Douglas has translated Zicari’s essay in full, and has annotated it in a prose which forty years has only served to embellish.”—*Sunday Times*.

“The August number is made memorable by two striking articles . . . Mr. Jack Lindsay’s interesting psychological argument . . . a brilliant exposition by Norman Douglas.”—*John o’London’s*.

JULY, 1948 “A splendid article by Mr. Richard Perry.”—*Glasgow Herald*.

“The July number of this bright and irrepressible monthly contains a good deal of varied reading. Goethe is the subject of a tempered Freudian analysis by John Urzidil.”—*Tribune*.

JUNE, 1948 “A long and thoughtful essay by Margiad Evans (on Emily Brontë and Byron) . . . an article that should not be missed.”—*Nottingham Guardian*.

Brendin Publishing Company, Ltd., 430 Strand, London, W.C. 2.

---

#### SUBSCRIPTION FORM

### LIFE AND LETTERS

*Continuing THE LONDON MERCURY*

430 STRAND, LONDON, W.C. 2.

TEMPLE BAR 7697

Name. . . . . Address . . . . .

I enclose 20/- subscription to “Life and Letters” for one year post free

Signature. . . . . Date . . . . .

## CORRESPONDENCE

---

THE EDITOR,  
*Life and Letters*,  
STRAND,  
LONDON, W.C. 2.

DEAR SIR,

W. A. B. COOLIDGE

I am at work on a book dealing with the Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge (1850-1926), 'the young American who climbs with his Aunt and his dog,' who became the greatest of all Alpine historians.

His library of correspondence in the Zentralbibliothek, Zürich, bequeathed to the Swiss Alpine Club on his death, has kindly been placed at my disposal; I am, however, anxious to obtain any additional information on his life and would be most grateful for any help your readers could give.

'The fiery lamb' was a unique product of the Victorian age, a familiar figure in Oxford, where he was a Fellow of Magdalen, and the leading combatant in most of the major Alpine disputes of his time.

Personal information would be much appreciated, while any letters or photographs sent on loan would, of course, be most carefully handled and returned.

Yours faithfully,

RONALD W. CLARK.

10 CAMPDEN STREET,  
LONDON, W. 8.

## BOOKS TO POSSESS

|                     |                           |      |
|---------------------|---------------------------|------|
| Barbara Ward        | The West at Bay           | 12/6 |
| John Betjeman       | Selected Poems            | 8/6  |
| W. S. Churchill     | Maxims and Reflections    | 8/6  |
| John Bowle          | Unity of European History | 18/- |
| P. M. S. Blackett   | Atomic Energy             | 12/6 |
| W. B. Turrill       | British Plant Life        | 21/- |
| Hope Muntz          | The Golden Warrior        | 12/6 |
| T. S. Eliot         | A Symposium               | 10/6 |
| James Sutherland    | Eighteenth Century Poetry | 12/6 |
| Buxton Forman (Ed.) | Letters of John Keats     | 21/- |
| Martin Secker (Ed.) | The 1890's                | 21/- |
| Harold Child        | Essays and Reflections    | 8/6  |

**JOHN & EDWARD BUMPUS, LTD.**

*Booksellers to His Majesty the King*

**477 OXFORD ST., LONDON, W.I.**

Telephone : MAYfair 3601-5.

Highest Prices paid for

GOOD STANDARD WORKS

Libraries, Modern Books and Sets purchased.

ROBERT CHRIS, 8 Cecil Court, LONDON, W.C. 2  
TEMPLE BAR 6700

TO KEEP ABREAST WITH TO-DAY'S BOOKS, COME TO

**B LONDON'S BRIGHTEST BOOKSHOP**

You can **ALWAYS** see them in profusion here.

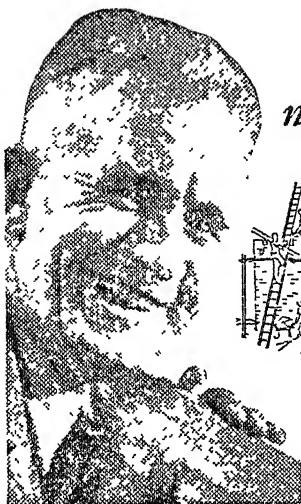
**BOOKS. Messengers of Goodwill !!**

Exclusive Notebooks; Engravers, Diestampers, and Printers;  
Visiting and Invitation Cards for Official and Professional use  
engraved promptly and accurately.

**S TRUSLOVE & HANSON**

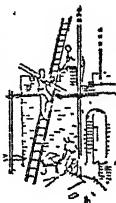
14a CLIFFORD STREET (New Bond Street), W.I.

**B  
O  
O  
K  
S**



# COLDS

*never cut my pay packet!*



Colds cut production, but canny workers carry a tin of POTTER'S CATARRH PASTILLES and stay on the job.

Wonderful for COLDS, COUGHS, BRONCHITIS, HAY FEVER. 1/4d a tin.

## POTTER'S CATARRH PASTILLES

POTTER & CLARKE LTD., ARTILLERY LANE, LONDON, E.I.

CP403

---

### SUBSCRIPTION FORM

## LIFE AND LETTERS

*Continuing THE LONDON MERCURY*

430 STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2.

TEMPLE BAR 7697

Name ..... Address .....

I enclose 20/- subscription to "Life and Letters" for one year post free

Signature ..... Date .....

# LIFE AND LETTERS

*continuing The London Mercury  
edited by Robert Herring*

| Vol. 61  | CONTENTS                                      | No. 141 |
|--|---|---------|
| EDITORIAL  |   | page 97 |
|  | ARTICLE                                       |         |
| NEUROSIS AS A HANDICAP TO GENIUS,<br><i>by Phyllis Bottome</i>   |   | 100     |
|  | POEM  |         |
| SONG, <i>by Margiad Evans</i>  |   | 109     |
|  | ESSAYS  |         |
| ARCADIANS AND BARBARIANS, <i>by Margiad Evans</i>  |   | 110     |
| HISTORY IN DREAMS, <i>by Jack Lindsay</i>  |   | 127     |
|  | POETRY  |         |
| SAILORS ON THE MOVING LAND,<br><i>by Vernon Watkins</i>  |   | 140     |
| TO MY SON, <i>by George Barker</i>   |   | 146     |
|  | STORY   |         |
| SORROW DAM AND MR. MILLBANK,<br><i>by Edgar Mittelhölzer</i>   |   | 148     |
|  | ARTICLE                                       |         |
| LES FRÈRES ZEMGANNO, <i>by Thomas Walton</i>   |   | 154     |
|  | CRITICISM                                     |         |
| THE THEATRE, <i>by Robert Herring</i>  |   | 163     |
| REVIEWS OF BOOKS, <i>by Marie C. Stopes, T. H. Jones, George Ewart Evans, Fred Urquhart, Sandro Duke of Redonda, John Freeman.</i> |   | 170     |
|  | Typography by Séan Jennett                    |         |
|  | American Correspondent: Norman Holmes Pearson |         |

# UNWIN

ALUN LEWIS

## In the Green Tree

*Home Letters and Six Short Stories*

“An impressive book.”—HAROLD NICHOLSON in *Observer*.  
“Remarkable evocation of atmosphere—we feel the jungle about us, the heat, the sweat, the flies.”—JAMES LAVER,  
*B.B.C. Home Service*. *Foreword by A. L. ROWSE. Illustrated by JOHN PETTS.* 8s. 6d. net

## The Last Inspection

“Mr. Lewis brings a poet’s perception to the characters in this brilliant collection of short stories . . . A book that should not be missed.”—G. W. BISHOP in *Daily Telegraph*. 3rd impression. 7s. 6d. net

RAIDERS’ DAWN.

6th impression, 7s. 6d. net

HA! HA! AMONG THE TRUMPETS.

2nd impression. 5s. net

---

## The Free and Independent

H. KEMBALL COOK. A highly diverting account of the perils, trials, and triumphs of the parliamentary elector. *Library of English Thought and Life. Illustrated.* 8s. 6d. net

## Children Never Tell

GWENDOLEN FREEMAN, Author of *The Houses Behind*. These sketches show a remarkable understanding of a child’s world, and particular of the reserve which is an inseparable part of it. 8s. 6d. net

---

*George Allen and Unwin Ltd*

---

## EDITORIAL

---

*May, 1949*

RECENTLY there was before Parliament a proposal for the reform of English spelling. It was defeated by a small margin. The surprising thing was not so much the proposal as the narrowness of that margin. There is clearly a case to be made out for reducing some of the obstacles which foreigners meet in learning our language, and I do not propose to enter the lists crying 'Hands off our spelling!' What I do wish to discuss is an aspect to which little attention was paid at the time, and that is that the important thing about words is not so much their spelling as their meaning.

It should not be necessary to say this, but I do because on all sides there seems to me a growing slovenliness in the use of words and a quite frightening ignorance of the primary meaning of quite elementary ones. Sometimes this ignorance displays itself in unnecessary bolstering of a word with additions, so that we 'face *up* to' a thing we are going 'around'. Sometimes it takes the form of using one word to take the place of another which seems like it, but in truth has a different meaning. An example of this is the revolting verb 'to stem' which to-day is loosely used as a variant for 'to branch', though there was a time when 'branch' and 'stem' were regarded, rightly, as being rather different. Before the war we for long had to suffer 'luxury' used as an adjective in place of 'luxurious', and this trend of distortion is continued to-day with 'famed' quite needlessly taking the place of 'famous'. Readers will have their own horrors, with which they are affronted daily in their papers, but it is not only journalism that is to blame, though a study of the Press over Easter made me feel that not only reporting but sub-editing and the entire technique of lay-out and headlining is in a sad decline: one Sunday paper, which used to be regarded as 'serious', gave me the impression of being written and composed as a competition in wisecracks, so much so that one had the feeling

that the cracks came first and everything else was used to fill in: this particular issue headed a book-review 'Happy Never After', an article on films carried across the top 'Hard, Soft, and Scrambled', the reference, as it was Easter, being to eggs, and coined the stately word 'festivalismus'. Politicians have for long played their part in debasing the value of words, 'super priority plus' being perhaps the worst of the verbal infelicities our rulers have seen fit to inflict on us. The jargon of advertising has further inflated the currency of what should be communication. Statesmen and salesmen, however, by the nature of their calling must use words to make things seem not what they are and sometimes apparently what they are not. The rest of us, however, have no such excuse and may ask ourselves why we use words if we are not sure of their meanings.

The answer is one we are not likely to give, but it is true none the less. It is that we are frightened of their meanings. The general trend to-day is to be ignorant of the true meaning of a word—because we want to be. We cover up that either by using a word in its wrong sense or by using several to reinforce one of whose real significance we have only a dim apprehension. Instead of taking the trouble to be sure of the meaning of a word, we will in nine cases out of ten use an oblique variant or, seeing truth already through a haze, add to the opacity by a cloud of prepositions, adverbs, false synonyms and misunderstood adjectives. Instead of the one right word, we use two, neither of which is right, and we don't use that one which is because, I suggest, we don't dare to. Because we have got used to muddled thinking, and because our muddled thinking is itself a symbol of something deeper, to whose roots we are unwilling to delve for fear of finding that something is wrong. It is that something is wrong we are unwilling to face, not what is wrong, for we know instinctively that most things can be 'cured'. It is the possibility of being cured that we are unwilling to face, and therefore that there is anything wrong at all. We would hide the roots with a mass of foliage, our thoughts with a mass of verbiage. We would rather not say precisely what we mean because we have become chary of committing ourselves to a precise meaning. That would entail accepting responsibility for it, and individual

#### EDITORIAL

responsibility is at the moment something few are strong enough in themselves to accept. We realize that vagueness and wooliness hampers communication, and that lack of communication will drive us the more in upon ourselves, which we are as unwilling to face, as we are to contemplate of what those selves consist. For the look of the thing, therefore, we make some show of being concerned to improve matters. In language, we will advocate a sudden synthetic spelling, bearing no relation to derivations, rather than suggest a deeper acquaintance with meaning. We will seek a cure from the top, instead of getting to the state of mind of which the outer muddle is sign. As with spelling, so with other activities, public and private. There is hardly a problem now before the world for which the treatment advocated is not superficial. A large number of the problems themselves are superficial or would be if we were willing to understand what lies behind them, what is their meaning. We are not willing and, in the muddle which is the mask we put on our fear, we prefer not to be. We feel it is better not to do what we want and to be unwilling in what we do because, that way, no one can accuse us of being responsible for our actions. We will suffer for others' mistakes, because that absolves us from our own. To make none, and to see to it that we make none, would remove from us our greatest prop—the wish to placate. With no one to placate, we should have no one to fear; out of reaction from that, to deceive; and, when that is successful, no one to be flattered by. All of which in our present stage of development is unthinkable. As peoples, as well as persons, the most we attempt is to reach or to cause a paralysis of impotence, so that no 'harm' can be done. In this state, we achieve little, talk much, and mean—to ourselves as to everyone else—nearly nothing.

The Editor is glad to consider MSS. though he cannot enter into correspondence over unsolicited contributions. No MSS. will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. Editorial Communications should be addressed to *LIFE AND LETTERS*, 430 Strand, London, W.C. 2. The annual subscription is 20s. (post free), U.S.A. \$5.

# NEUROSIS AS A HANDICAP TO GENIUS

---

PHYLLIS BOTTOME

“ ’Tis we who, lost in stormy visions, keep  
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,  
And in mad trance strike with our spirits’ knife  
Invulnerable nothings.”—Shelley, *Adonais*.

WHEN we come to deal with a thought its history becomes as significant as when we come to deal with a person. Even our slow-paced Courts of Justice have begun to find that without knowledge of the criminal himself, there is no weighing of his crime; a starving man stealing a loaf of bread has not committed the same crime as a vain girl snatching at silk stockings from a counter, though both are, technically speaking, thieves.

The ‘why’ at the source of the thought is more vital, and often more revealing than the thought itself. Before we try to answer the question of whether neurosis is a handicap to genius or an advantage, we must define what we mean by the word ‘neurosis’ and by the word ‘genius’. The writer accepts the Adlerian definition of neurosis as the alibi chosen by the neurotic to release himself from carrying out one or more of the main obligations of life—the ‘If—but’ solution. ‘I should like to do it if—’ or, ‘I should have done it but—’; and for a rough definition of genius, the stretching out further of the powers of the mind than the ordinary human being can reach, indicating in the genius a plus quantity or quality, along some line of productiveness profitable to humanity. The word itself ‘genius’ with its perceptible link with ‘geniality’ seems to imply a service valuable to mankind.

Why then should people think that neurosis is akin to genius, and that should the neurosis be cured, the genius might vanish with the disease? As a first step to the discovery of genius we must ask what kind of people do we find hold this adverse

opinion? It must be a convenient and happy thought for 'low-brows' or those who wish to avoid the development of a difficult talent, to realize that this Bird of Paradise, the genius, must pay for the brilliance of his plumage by a fell disease.

'We men of common-sense,' the man in the street has rather arrogantly been heard to say, 'may not possess genius, but we have something far safer!'

But suppose that the man in the street is wrong in both these assumptions, i.e. that he has common-sense, or that there is anything safer than genius?

Suppose instead that it is the genius who has the common-sense, and far more of it indeed than most people; and that where it is conspicuously lacking, the defect lies in the man himself as a human being, and has a most adverse effect upon his talent, first menacing its free development and at last, if the neurosis is persisted in, destroying the genius altogether?

Perhaps some of those geniuses who possess marked talents find it a convenient excuse to believe that their neurosis is necessary to the output of their gift. 'I cannot afford to give up drink or drugs or women because my talent would go with it?' such a man says to himself reassuringly; and it is possible that if he could be persuaded to give up the symptom only (and such habits are but symptoms of a deeper derangement of the human being) the genius might find himself, without the stimulant of his vice, in a worse position than before, and therefore less able to produce his talent; as Swinburne was devitalized by the Nursery Maid activities of his friend Watts Dunton; but should the neurosis itself be attacked and the genius cured of the discouragement which was leading him to seek his escape in vice, there can be no reasonable doubt that both the man and his gift would profit by his cure.

When people once sang with deep conviction that placid hymn beginning:—

'The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate;  
God made them high and lowly—  
And ordered their estate,'

not very much could be done about it.

If you were the rich man you had a good conscience, and

felt that you went as far, or rather further than you need, when you made it worth the poor man's while to be at your gate. If you were the poor man you knew that even God acquiesced in your poverty.

It was not until this idea was tracked to its lair that the moral inflexibility of wealth was shaken.

The low-brow of to-day places himself enthusiastically in the same position as the rich man—if he is right and possesses something safer than intelligence, he is also exempt from doing anything further about it—and need not train his wits.

Nor need a genius, suffering from a neurosis which is dear to him, take any steps to recover from it, since he can always say to himself, that were he to make such an effort, he might throw the baby out with the bath and lose his genius altogether.

Obviously this is a thesis worth upholding by a good many people. Unfortunately for those who hold it, there is a sharp contradiction in fact.

It has been found that many geniuses, and among them those that mankind account the greatest, have been men of unusual stability and balance, who avoided any assistance from a neurosis. These men lived normally and to a good old age without finding it desirable to adopt either a vice or a disease in order to stimulate their genius. Their powers developed with apparent ease and went on developing to the end of their lives.

Whereas the neurotic genius, or as we may call him the escape-artist, swiftly or slowly according to the power of his neurosis, destroys both his life and his gift.

There is a great danger in the isolation of intelligence; and in the attempt to divorce it from common-sense, so prevalent in the modern world. It needs to be combated as fiercely as the old selfishness of religious sterility which discouraged intelligence. If people believed that intelligence and its free development was a practical asset they would not be so eager to yield their wits and the independence out of which intelligence is born, to merely authoritative persons. Men of genius undogged by neurosis have been very efficient at keeping the wolf from the door. We need go very little further than our own times to

remember instances of successful men of genius, such as Marconi, Edison, Einstein, Browning, Freud, Adler, T. S. Eliot, Cézanne, Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Debussy, and Elgar—no mean list, and one that could be lengthened, in order to realize that genius is not any disadvantage to its possessor in the material world. It is true that by no means all or even the majority of geniuses succeed in avoiding the pitfalls common to mankind, but there is nothing peculiar to geniuses in their failures.

The man in the street suffers disaster and inability to acquire a future; he is also often enough a victim of neurosis.

It is said that in New York State alone one out of every five persons has been under treatment for some form of mental breakdown; but the percentage of genius among these victims is so small as to be negligible.

If we study the lives of geniuses afflicted by neurosis, we can discover for ourselves the part played by this disease, both in their productiveness and in their development as human beings.

Let us take for instance three such well-known types of neurotic genius as Swift, Byron, and Nietzsche.

These three men were so far ahead of the circles in which they moved and so violently dynamic that their genius, even in their own lifetimes, was hardly in dispute. Compare Swift's razor wits with those of the somnolent lords he served; compare the reach of Byron's iconoclastic intelligence with the society of Aunt Sallie's out of which he reeled; compare Nietzsche's rich, unbalanced fiery spirit, with the complacent twaddle of those forgotten critics against whom he railed.

We all know the ultimate catastrophes of these three geniuses, Swift and Nietzsche died insane; Byron at the end of a forlorn series of explosive love affairs, and after a social disaster as spectacular as his literary successes, died on the threshold of middle-age in an abortive attempt to turn himself into a military hero.

Swift's clear mind, in spite of its supreme directness, its mastery of style, its inner vision, could not give him the career he had dreamed of, nor save him from a perpetual landslide of ruined friendships and lost opportunities.

Worst of all, Swift failed to obtain any outward harmony

in what was perhaps the most suitable of love relationships. Probably Stella, or Vanessa would either of them (especially Stella, who was rightly the core of Swift's affections) have sufficed to make any normal man contented; but two of them insufficiently loved and unnaturally restricted, only succeeded in agonizing Swift.

Whether Swift really had an inherited disease that prevented marriage, or merely so great a disinclination to intimacy, that in those absurdly unscientific times he could successfully play with the idea of such a convenient barrier, one can never know. But if he suffered from an organic mental disease, considering the life he led of grinding overwork, incredible hours, and ill-cooked meals, it would seem curious that he lived so long and so ably without an earlier breakdown. He was, it is true, supposed to have died of general paralysis of the insane, but that is said by modern psychiatrists to count for very little, since G.P.I. was the common diagnosis of an age that had learned little or nothing about the different forms of insanity and their causes.

We have, as documents, Swift's own letters to read, and can watch his violent love of power 'o'er leaping itself', until sickened and disheartened by perpetual disappointments, narrowed and darkened by despair, his brilliant gifts sank into decay.

Swift never rose to the heights he was fitted to achieve, either in the world of politics or in the church of God. He left only one permanent, though not widely read book, *The Tale of a Tub*. His arrow flights of wit hardly survive the politics they pierced. No one reads Swift's deadly pamphlets now, nor can we feel, having studied Swift's mind, that they were so much the honest expression of a whole man, as the prostitution of his wits for the sake of gaining power.

Without Swift's ego-centric bitterness, without his hatred and suspicion of mankind, can we doubt that he would have accomplished more and gone further along the road of his fundamental desires?

Swift maimed himself as most people maim themselves, not in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but to retreat into the hell of his own loneliness.

It is only in his letters to Stella that the real Swift survives his time. This mere foam, as he must have thought them, blown from the great waves of his struggle for power, preserves Swift's genius as nothing else he produced succeeded in doing. The simple yet intelligent love of these two women set Swift free from the shackles of his hatred and scorn of humanity.

With Stella and Mrs. Dingely he felt that he could afford tenderness and confidence; they would not betray him; they were indeed stronger than his suspicion of mankind.

If Swift had only been sure of his own integrity the falsities and blunders of humanity would still have seemed to him worth while to remove, but they would not have embittered him to the point of madness. The great grim brain of this master of satire released from its cruel tensions, and relieved from the continuous cycle of ego-centricity might have blossomed into a gigantic humour as good-natured and as far-reaching as Rabelais.

The pity that might have inspired Swift's masterpiece need never have degenerated into the self-torture that helped to drag his wits into a premature decay.

Byron is an even more spectacular example of the destructive force of neurosis upon genius. All men with club feet need not be mentally warped; and no one can fail to see how little good the indulgence of his nerves did Byron either as a man or as a poet. A spoilt child unable to over-drive a violently domineering mother, Byron wasted his mind on how to subdue a series of silly and less violent women. Compare the fine balance and reach of Byron's mind in his letters to men, the virility of his English and the robustness of his thought (letters in which his neurosis played no part) with the windy vacuity of his sex exposures! Did his neurosis inspire his poetry? He wrote, 'She walks in beauty like the night' before it had developed; many of his earliest poems are his best.

What remains of Byron for posterity, and keeps his memory alive upon the Continent even more than it is kept alive in his own country, is that hounded out of English Society, Byron used his wits to show up the hitherto unexposed weaknesses both of his country and its chief occupants.

His contribution like Swift's was used to express his enmity

to mankind. His greatest poem *Don Juan* serves to show up Byron's chief enemy—woman. In this poem he makes himself an eternal victor over (or perhaps more truly an eternal victim to) the sex that held him fast.

In unforgettable words he points out that love is not man's whole existence, although he took no steps to disprove this fallacy in his own life, while characteristically adding that love is all that women can expect from theirs! Had Byron not been so chafed by his rages, so worn out with his perpetual rounds against fresh female antagonists, so determined to be still admired by the England he flouted, and still accepted by the society he scorned, what real poetry, with the stuff of life in it, we might have had from him, instead of the yards and yards of impatient and windy rhetoric that rocked the romantic realm of his day! Byron tore away the veil that covered certain hypocrisies of his time, but only from those hypocrisies that penalized his blunders.

He told mankind in a language so pungent that it is still worth reading that the woman you despise cannot satisfy you; but this is an insufficient message to mankind from a mind strong enough to have shaken Europe out of a long period of unilluminated selfishness.

Leaving his great task undone, Byron petered out, untrained and disconsolate, before an adventure for which he was wholly unprepared.

Perhaps posterity will acclaim Nietzsche the greatest genius of these three, and he is certainly the one, who, from the welter of our present times, stands out most plainly, the one who has given us thoughts still far beyond our scope.

Was Nietzsche then perhaps a proof that genius, or at least a certain type of genius gains by neurosis? There is no great mystery about Nietzsche's life, so that we have only to read it to answer our own question. Nietzsche's existence, nearer in point of time to our own, is better authenticated than either of the other two; it contains no great disastrous secret such as Swift's, not any explosive scandal such as Byron's.

We can watch Nietzsche from his earliest years in a quiet comfortable middle-class home, dominating a tenderly spoiling feminine entourage. We can observe the mixture of intense

daring and pitiful helplessness such spoiling can produce in genius; and the terrible sensitiveness which adhesive love stimulates in its victims. Nietzsche was protected from the healthy rebuffs of the outside world, while irritated through and through by watchful tenderness—the price paid by men for their mastery over devoted women. Out of the mixture of daring and sensitiveness, fiery irritability, and rickety idealism, Nietzsche's genius had to struggle as best it could.

The force of possessive love with its cruel train of self-deluding jealousy ate through Nietzsche's ardent and helpless spirit like a corrosive acid. No wife could ever replace his devoted completely self-sacrificing mother; nor could his brother man be expected to accept the arrogance inspired in Nietzsche by the complete submissiveness of his intelligent sister.

Nietzsche, after the heart-breaking disillusion of his intimacy with Wagner; and the cruel torments of his abortive love interests, was driven back into a self-made family isolation.

Such an isolation though it gave him the time and solitude for creative work, did nothing to tranquillize or sustain his sensitive soul. Outer rebuffs and disenchantments constantly hindered the balance of his uneasy mind, and goaded it into perpetual self-contradiction, and an agonizing restlessness.

These were but the forerunners of the megalomania that destroyed him.

Without the constant restrictions and breakdowns caused by his neurosis, the world might have learned far sooner what Nietzsche had to teach, and Nietzsche himself might have been freed from that deeply rooted pessimism which broke his heart and vitiated the full value of his genius.

Even the modern reader of Nietzsche, aware of the extent of his powers and content to overlook his limitations, must choke down a certain amount of arrogance before he can swallow the perpetual hostility of Nietzsche's thoughts and forms of expression, and how much more must his contemporaries, unaware of this genius, have been repulsed by Nietzsche's malevolence of expression?

The perpetual challenge of Nietzsche's hostility, his desire to wound and lacerate as he himself had been wounded and

lacerated, demands of his readers, a complete absence of prejudice and an adult tolerance of mind, neither of which Nietzsche had ever trained himself to display.

The dynamic force of Nietzsche is not yet spent, and much of it has passed and may still pass on to the minds of other creative spirits, stimulating them to take directions far other than his own.

He was a fiery portent difficult for lesser minds to judge or even to follow, and made far more difficult by the constant fret and friction of his tortured self-contradictions.

What Nietzsche gave to the world was priceless, but what his neurosis restricted him from giving must have been still more priceless, for the last word of life cannot be hatred. Nietzsche's neurosis of perpetual suspicion, developed into active paranoia and ultimately destroyed him; and a man cannot be destroyed by an inner force without the same disturbing quality vitiating the quality of his work.

Adler describes genius as the release of a greater activity than normal, and neurosis as a progressive restriction of normal activity. He used to draw a circle to represent the capacities of a normal man and a line through both extremities of the circle's circumference to show the reach of genius. To define neurosis he would draw a line retreating from the circumference into a knot in the centre of the circle, unable either to follow out in the round the circle filled by a normal mind's capacity, or to transcend the circle as the mind of a genius transcends it.

If we take the names of some of those geniuses acclaimed by mankind as its greatest, such names as Socrates, Jesus, Confucius, Buddha, Plato, Giotto, Bach, Spinoza, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dante, Racine, Rabelais, Voltaire, Goethe, to take but a few of them by hazard, and compare their normal lives and the extent to which their powers were carried with those of the escape-artists, we can but come to the conclusion that neurosis must be the worst handicap genius has ever had to face. Think, for instance, of the startling 'wholeness' of Shakespeare. We have only to remember the lines written after his death by his fellow actors, Heming and Condell, 'hand and mind met together, and what he thought he uttered,

with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his paper.'

The house divided against itself *must* fall; the mind that is healthy produces that which is healthy, and has no need of a disease to reveal its beauties to mankind.

## SONG

by MARGIAD EVANS

The remnants of youth within  
are very hard to own—  
they are the silver splints that dance  
away escorted bone:  
they are a sharp retort from life .  
when we have taught it 'sense' ;  
unfinished quiet that starts a heart,  
undone obedience . . .  
a discord sweeter than the tune!  
The thunder in the velvet room!

The remnants of youth without  
are sadder still than these—  
they are the quelled and blinded flower  
that gropes in vain to please.  
They are clouds incarnating sky,  
the fountain sound of bees  
dissolved, as is the foliage  
of dark, deer-headed trees;  
and bitterer are both to bear  
than love without its marriage year.

# ARCADIANS AND BARBARIANS

(Or Remarks On Some English Songs)

---

## MARGIAD EVANS

### I

PERHAPS not very many people live in these silenced times who are aware that there exists in our English songs, one so apt to Ophelia's case, that with the alteration of a single word, it is in her mouth. The song is very old. Thus it runs:

Early one morning  
Just as the sun was rising,  
I heard a poor maiden in the valley below  
'Oh don't deceive me!  
Oh never leave me!  
How could you use a poor maiden so?

Don't you remember  
The vows you made to your Mary?  
Don't you remember when you vowed that you'd be true!  
Oh don't deceive me, etc.

Fresh are the roses  
And gay is the garland,  
I've culled from the garden to bind upon thy brow.  
Oh don't deceive me, etc.'

Thus sang the poor maiden  
Her sorrow bewailing;  
Thus sang the poor maiden in the valley below.  
Oh don't deceive me . . . , etc.<sup>1</sup>

With very slight alterations this famous and beautiful tradition

<sup>1</sup> The text as I have given it is from memory which method as the most consistent I shall continue to follow. Slight variations are to be found in all traditional songs and airs.

tional song with its plaintive, running air, is to be found in that treasure book of lyric, *The National Song Book*, first issued by Boosey for the Board of Education in 1905. And a very necessary and important book it has proved to be, for in it are contained very many disappearing poems and airs of great and almost unheeded beauty.

I am not, however, allowing that Boosey's collection is complete or final. Many of the songs I propose to discuss are not in it: these were committed to me by the living voice of a greatly gifted nurse-maid, or by patient school-music teachers; and my own singing of them copied them indelibly upon myself. So that even now they are not memories—rather, in me, they are habits; and as habits no doubt, in their green day, they grew. So that I do not write of them as a folk-lorist, but simply as a user.

'Early one morning' is a true old English song, simple, narrow, sad. It repeats a phrase 'in the valley below' which is used as a refrain in another lovely traditional song, 'Sweet Nightingale'. And it is an excellent starting point for a consideration of the old English song poem as lyric poetry, for it consists and is interwoven of three of the most usual themes to be found therein—i.e., forlorn love: country life: and nature. Of the last, here represented by flowers and the rising sun two thirds of English song-poetry, and almost all great English verse, *in some measure*, consists. Take as an instance the west-country 'Cuckoo Song'

The cuckoo is a pretty bird,  
She singeth as she flies,  
She bringeth us glad tidings  
She telleth us no lies;  
Her nest she never buildeth,  
But astray she always flies,  
And all the time she calleth:  
Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo!  
I nowhere have a home.

and it will be seen with what loving and meticulous accuracy the habits of the bird have been noticed and described. For inanimate, as for animate nature, in the loveliest of our Carols 'The Holly and the Ivy' we have exquisitely poetic

descriptions of the holly's leaf, flower, and fruit, and a chorus of two most vivid, eternal lines:

The rising of the Sun, and the running of the deer

The playing of the merry organ, sweet singing in the choir.

It would appear that our most national poets, from Shakespeare and Milton to the anonymous rural composer of song verses such as the 'Cuckoo Songs' will not or cannot depart from the companionship of Nature. Nature is the muse of the Englishman's mind, is both the adorer and the mockery of his love, its consoler, its pointer. Nature is his profound and his careless study; it is the body of his poetry and almost of his being. Consider: the Englishman is by race inaccurate, but not on Nature. He is uncertain, but not with Nature. He is flippant and frivolous and sad, but not with Nature. To his reverence, his accuracy and his truth towards it, the singular rarity of his slips testifies. You may catch him out on anything else, but not on this. Milton would not displace a season, Shakespeare a flower for any *apparent* poetic power that might ensue. Equally learned in the truth and the times of the sun, equally faithful are the poets whose names have gone beneath the grass—the composers unknown of our beautiful old song lyrics. The themes vary; but even in their diversity they bend within the seasonal rhythm. As with our old carvers and stonemasons, the birds, beasts, foliage though rude and fantastic are fundamentally realistic—the adornment, the inspiration are true, so with our song writers, from 'The Barley Mow' with its joyous feast of enormous healths and its old impish, witchish chorus—

The nipperkin, pipperkin and the brown bowl—  
to the most beautiful opening verse of the golden-pastoral hymn 'Fair waved the Golden Corn'

Fair waved the golden corn  
In Canaan's pleasant land,  
When full of joy some shining morn  
Went forth the reaper band.

and that other landscape of :

There is a green hill far away  
Without a city wall.

'Fair Waved the Golden Corn' and 'There is a Green Hill' are no less traditional songs for being hymns—and no less shining lyrics either. And perhaps they are the only two landscape songs we English have made which will fitly compare with the Welsh 'Watching the Wheat' of which the serene, contemplative sweetness is unsurpassable in all out-of-doors music. Both 'Fair Waved' and 'Watching the Wheat' are full of strong voices, vitality and peaceful joy—but 'Green hill' is instinct with another English trait—melancholy. With the exception of this one Welsh song I have just mentioned and another Lowland Scottish, I shall confine myself to the English 'lieder' which national vanity and natural judgment blend to make me consider the finest of their kind, in the world. For both airs and words are of the old true beauty and show how nearly one are the art of lyric poetry and that of lyric music. In reading the words of such a poem as 'Barbara Allen' we *feel* the current of the music—we sense its form in the vocal sounds. And in hearing the music, the poem takes outline. It is so with all the best and the simplest of our traditional songs. And perhaps 'Barbara Allen' is the best. This poem seems to me to touch 'Clerk Saunders' in its unearthly realism. It is of the gravest simplicity: like worn but significant beauty, 'its face wears moods, not paints.' And it has one of those rare, utterly suitable tunes which are wholly engrossed by the words, unlike those pretty but loose airs which play about the core of a song like fountains over stones—of which the loveliest example I can recall is C. E. Horn's 'Cherry Ripe'. As water fits the wave, as the lake is the shape for evening's colour, the air of 'Barbara Allen' occupies the words of the poem. Here is the text as I was taught to sing it.

In Scarlet Town when I was born  
 There was a fair maid dwellin'  
 Made every lad cry, lack-a-day—  
 Her name was Barbara Allen.

All in the merry month of May  
 When green buds they were swellin'  
 Young Jimmy Grove on his deathbed lay  
 For love o' Barbara Allen.

And death is printed on his face  
 And o'er his heart is stealing;  
 Then haste away to comfort him  
 Oh lovely Barbara Allen.

So slowly slowly she came up  
 And slowly she came nigh him,  
 And all she said when she came near  
 'Young man I think you're dying.'

When he was dead and laid in grave  
 Then she was smote with sorrow;  
 'Oh mother, mother make my bed  
 For I shall die to-morrow.'

'Now heed my words ye virgins all  
 And shun the fault I fell in.  
 Henceforth take warning by the fall  
 Of cruel Barbara Allen.'

'Barbara Allen' is anonymous. Anonymous as a storm. So are 'Helen of Kirconnel', 'Clerk Saunders,' 'The Queen's Marie,' with which poems this great lyric ballad may best be rated. They are all of that unclaimed verse which seems uttered out of an event rather than a person. The ghosts of literature, they have shed, in years, their body of a name, and a date. 'Barbara Allen' rates chastity ungenerous and cruel: it holds the note of all our old love poetry—of Shakespeare's sonnets and Campion's subtle songs. I am told that it has appeared in an anthology, which, as it is never sung, makes to it the modern amends.

It contains both the biographical and the lost-love themes. The motifs of English traditional songs are not many—perhaps half a dozen in all of which the most used is country life, biography, nature, the love lost heart, sea faring and the others. Under the heading of country life we may put the hunting and sporting songs, the drinking songs and the festival songs. There are, however, two particular extensions of these—our carols, and our maypole songs. These last are Elizabethan. The best are the three lovely 'Haste to the Maypole', 'Joan to the Maypole' and 'Come Lasses and

Lads'. I shall be referring again to 'Come Lasses and Lads', both for its rhythm and its kind. It is a 'chattering song', the words crowded upon the quick beat like intricate steps upon restricted space.

## II

Before giving further examples of the old song poems, however, I should like bluntly to ask whether we can afford to lose them, even with all the grandeur of our literature? Characteristic, sheer, unliterary, as they are, they contain that very kind of beauty we insist now-a-days to be a true beauty. Contact improves them—familiarity makes them fresher. And musically? Is it not fact that our musical output is neither so large nor so grand that we *can* let them go?

To me they seem to represent our best contribution to music. They are beautiful, and they are potential—that is primitive in the fertile manner of natural art-sound, sweet, searching, strong. English music in the grand sense, with very few exceptions, could vanish from the world, and no great space be left but on Purcell's pedestal—but the music of our songs, no more than the poetry of our 'minor' seventeenth century poets, can be spared. That indispensable and heavenly place, those poets occupy, represents in our poetry what the old English lyric airs represent in world-wide music—something original and glowing and small only because like the minor poets again its thoughts are rarer and are not attuned to the commonplace company of the great. Something in this music touches the very nerve of delight. But even supposing that the store of music would not be greatly lessened were these tunes lost, again one asks, what of the poetry? Rich as we are in our splendid poets, crowned and multi-starred among the nations, a few of us are so grasping of the least lustrous among them that we would not part with a linesworth of their true poetry in any form.

Lyric is one of our famous heritages. An irrevocable portion of English lyric is entwined with old English song. The ideal and grateful recognition of both would be their resurrection together, were it not for a kind of false vivacity in the act of

returning from the grave. People who would rather listen to any airs than their own could not be taught, or led to sing them. Listeners will never be singers. The very ones who were the singers are now the most flaccid listeners—no—not *listeners*—that is too positive a term. One cannot find a sufficiently inexpressive word for the incessant nonentities of noise we have become. A strong necessity for insipidity has us mustered; and never a crowd revolts. Occupation too, is an indoor, and not a fresh air habit, and we have lost the rhythm of a lot of work, most dancing and all festivals but the passive ones of the gazers. Therefore no self-conscious revival of these song-moods without the genuine, free rhythm of the people, is possible. Neither could ‘programmes’ of them bring back their old, free, plaintive out-of-door spirit. They were not written for the hall, the concert platform, the town choir, the modern competition, or even perhaps for the great voice, though they can make demands occasionally upon that. The discipline of the air, distance, landscape, moulds them best.

They are, however, in their lyric completeness and incompleteness, their sorrow and joy, their frequent and unforgettable monotony, almost natural and for this reason are really suitable to school singing. A ragged piping, a kind of harmonious hoarseness and unsettledness of unison suits them well. And in schools they are still sung, in voices that are still unself-conscious, wild, and burred. The beauty of the words may pass unheard, but the music—often music, as it were, *in dialect*—emerges as it was made. For an undefinable *ignorance* is part of them. Ignorance, in them is bliss. Ignorance, that is, in the sense which is not ugly, but worthy. Unlettered poetry is not rare, but rarely remembered and here is enclosed our most rich inscription of it. Indeed the term ‘ignorant poetry’ expresses their quality, if we are not haughty about it. Our ballad verse again is wealthy in such, but not so strongly that it can forget ‘The Golden Vanity’, and ‘Barbara Allen’ and ‘Ye shall walk in Silk Attire.’

Not all of our traditional songs are ‘ignorant’ and primitive however. Such a statement would be as absurd and ridiculous as to lump together ‘Drink to me only with thine Eyes’ and ‘The Cuckoo Song’, or Dr. Arne’s setting of ‘Blow, Blow thou

'winter wind' and 'I will give my love an apple'. C. E. Horn's delicious musical translation of Herrick's sophisticated 'Cherry Ripe', exquisite, famous among all types of singers, is clearly not of the same kind as 'The Barley Mow' yet they both rightly belong to old English song. Where then lies this cogent distinction?

It is difficult to decide exactly. The expressive definition shows first in our major poetry among our greatest intellects, and continues in our songs with our anonymous and carelessly unknown verse-makers.

### III

Arcadians and Barbarians! Of these two groups our great poets, our minor poets, and our song-poets consist. The Arcadian is the idealistic English poet, the Barbarian, the realistic. Shakespeare is our great Barbarian, Milton our supreme Arcadian. But the Barbarian is rarer than the Arcadian and nearer the true creativeness. For the one is the rule of light—make way, make way, I come—and the other the rule of precision which implies that *light is already present*. It takes a Shakespeare to make a Milton, and though it would appear at first the other way round, a 'Helen of Kirconnel' to make 'To Anthea'.

The profound impulse to seek out nature is inherent in both the Arcadian and the Barbarian poet and musician. And though the Barbarian is more frequently the more inspired in simplicity, devotion, and passion, that does not invariably follow. The Arcadian poet of an apparently artificial England, is capable of the gravest simplicity, the most exact faithfulness, and the Barbarian equally at times of the finest precision and noble decoration. The difficulty would appear to be the usual one of a fixed line—and so it is with our major poets. There however, we may leave it to instinct which rapidly and accurately decides in spite of all changes and chances. The Barbarian in an Arcadian trance, the Arcadian Barbarously at liberty, cannot deceive for long.

The great seventeenth-century poets, with the exception of Herbert and Vaughan, were all vigorous Arcadians. The seventeenth century was fertile in our song and richest in our

folk music. From the seventeenth century therefore we have gained traditional English songs of the most exquisitely finite form such as 'Cherry Ripe' and 'To Anthea'. The eighteenth century also was predominantly Arcadian and brought us 'The Lass with The Delicate Air', 'The Lass of Richmond Hill,' 'Sally in our alley'. But Arcadianism as a true expression of a very great kind of poetic genius waned into a mannered formality of conventionally naturalistic expression such as convinced nobody, because there was behind it neither love, nor experience of the countryside. With very few, but lovely nineteenth century exceptions, such as 'The Bloom is on the Rye' English song was ended. The great period was the period of 'Barbara Allen'—identical with the great Barbarian era—the Elizabethan.

Of course in so broad an attempt at definition we meet with contradictions. Shakespeare's songs, for which we have lost the contemporary airs, have received beautiful later Arcadian airs which in their dexterity do not often fit the intensely rural and luminous vision. Thus as traditional songs they were never the people's. No country gathering, no simple English village voice could manage (though they might love) Arne's 'Blow, Blow thou winter wind' or Schubert's 'Hark, Hark the lark.' Another confusion which arises out of other Barbarian songs receiving Arcadian settings and vice versa is not only that the spirit is wrong, but that the music is *badly cut* and overlaps the word-phrases. There *are* songs which are a successful—and supremely successful—blending. Of these is the outstandingly Arcadian song written by that Barbarian glory, Ben Jonson, 'Drink to me only with thine eyes.' The air, one of the most beautiful and the most natural we possess, as it is at once perfect and simple, has been ascribed to Mozart! But the truth is here again anonymous. So that we possess a purely Arcadian poem by a great Barbarian, and set to Barbarian music by an unknown composer of genius. Matter for confusion, but matter for tradition.

Also in the secondary Arcadian period of the mid eighteenth century, an unknown Barbarian poet of the most vivid and human distinction, wrote 'The Keel Row'. The distinction I am attempting was never more acutely presented than in

the contrast between 'The Keel Row' and the typically eighteenth century Arcadian song 'The Lass of Richmond Hill.'

It must not be supposed that I am attempting to put one type of song before the other, for the fact is that both kinds are traditional, both are equally lovely, both as truly English. What the Arcadian song loses in vividness and instantaneousness, it regains in gaiety and radiant grace: and what the Barbarian loses by its monotony, it picks up in personality and inspiration. But this it has that the other lacks—an easiness of words, a simplicity of musical compass, a certain day to day retired familiarity with day to day experience—which fitted it for to be a people's song. The Arcadian songs on the other hand have an accomplishment which belongs to the world, for the world to understand and appreciate. Also they are supremely difficult to sing well, demanding a high quality of voice, lightness, dexterity, and control. No trace of old rustic England shows in 'Cherry Ripe' or in Arne's 'Blow, blow thou winter wind' with its educated gloom and its difficult flattened semitones. The musical range too, is beyond the common pleasing voice, as the sentiments are beyond a yeoman's or a labourer's expression. But what power the Barbarian song possesses we can see and hear in 'Sweet Nightingale' and 'The Oak and the Ash' with its near monotony of music and words, so like to subdued sobbing. This is a seventeenth century song, in moderate time, not slow. There are verbal variations.

A North country maid up to London had strayed  
 Although with her nature it did not agree;  
 And she wept and she sighed  
 And bitterly she cried  
 'That I were once again in my own country.  
 Oh the oak and the ash, and the bonny ivy tree  
 They flourish at home in my own country.'

Though sadly I roam, I regret my dear home  
 Where the lads and the lassies are making the hay.  
 The birds they do sing  
 And the bells they do ring,

And the lads and the lasses so pleasant and gay.  
Oh the oak, etc.

No doubt did I please, I could marry with ease  
Where maidens are fair, many lovers will come.  
But he whom I wed  
Must be North-country bred  
And carry me back to the North country.  
Oh the oak,' etc.

One version gives rowan tree for ivy tree, but I am told—and feel—that it is a substitution. One which robs the poem of an inexplicable image, private to the girl's home-sick eyes, and makes the picture more general and less acutely possible. What and where was this 'ivy tree'? One feels there is a very particular place envisaged in this song, which though it makes small demand upon the voice, requires passion and warmth of tone. The music fits the words as the mine fits the gold. There is nothing over and nothing lacking. Let us now consider a verse of a lovely Arcadian song :

On Richmond Hill there lives a lass  
More fair than May Day morn,  
Whose charms all other maids surpass,  
A rose without a thorn.  
This lass so neat  
With smile so sweet  
Hath won my right goodwill  
I'd crowns resign, to call her mine  
Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill.

How insipid the lyric after 'The North Country Maid'. The tune is the pleasure—swift, delicate, exceedingly original, yet decorative, but unfortunately *too long*; for the concluding words have to be expanded in the repetitive manner of much Arcadian music, to

Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill  
Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill!  
I'd crowns resign to call her mine  
Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill.

Four unnecessary lines for the tune to climb, recoil, and end.

Yet with all this 'The Lass' is still one of our prettiest old songs. In it, as in 'The girl I left behind me' another eighteenth century jewel, the brave speed is the difficulty, and of course the breathing, which must be caught in, very, very quickly, like a quick stitch in the tune—*unseen* breathing. A third eighteenth century song, Barbarian in words and air, is a masterpiece. 'The Keel Row' is a dance and here the repetition is inherent. I give the central verse as containing the least. This Northumbrian song is remarkable as the only example in lyric I have found where a lover is praised for his skill at cards.

Oh wha's like my Johny  
 Sae lithe, sae blithe, sae bonny?  
 He's formost among the mony  
 Keel-lads o' coaly Tyne.  
 He'll set an' row sae tightly  
 Or in the dance sae sprightly  
 He'll cut an' shuffle sightly  
 T'is true were he not mine.  
 An weel may the keel row, the keel row, the keel row  
 An' weel may the keel row  
 That my laddy's in.

'The Keel Row' and 'Come lasses and lads' are the two most emphatically rhythmic tunes we possess; and the latter is extremely difficult. One would not expect an expert rendering of it from an ordinary person any more than from an untrained fiddler. It is catch-as-catch-can, and if you trip you slip. Children sing this best with their untried wind and treble swiftness. The rhythm  is very artful and hard to keep at. It is a peasant movement which is found in many of our country dances, and slowed, in some formal English dances for grander settings. We find it again, but more thoughtfully in 'Sweet Nightingale' in the first phrase:



My sweet heart come a- long

But reverting for a moment to 'The Kcel Row' we notice at once the reality of the utterance and the character behind it. Here is the North Country admiration for quickness of mind and body, and bright, keen temperament—

Sae lithe, sae blithe, sae bonny.  
He's *foremost* among the mony

which makes it genuine folk-song and able poetry. 'The Keel Row' is a valuable expression of the Tyneside mind. How different is the deeper, slower soul of the North country girl in 'The Oak and the Ash'. And this, in the queer old Barbarian West Country song, so very ancient and warm and generous.

I will give my love an apple  
Without any core  
I will give my love a house  
Without e'r a door;  
I will give my love a palace  
Wherein she may be,  
And she may unlock it  
Without e'r a key.

My head is the apple  
Without any core,  
My mind is the house  
Without e'r a door  
My heart is the palace  
Wherein she may be,  
And she may unlock it  
Without e'r a key.

The air is melancholy and rather heavy. As for the words, they are curious but apt as many a more supple restoration compliment. This song is almost mythologically old, like 'Johny Boy' and 'I will be married on a Tuesday morning'.

For an example fulfilling every feature of the best traditional song, in plainness, simplicity, reality and profound feeling, the Lowland Scots 'Ye shall walk in silk attire' is the one I would choose to set by 'Barbara Allen' and 'The Oak and the Ash'. Its great merit makes me include it for all it is over

the border. It is a far finer poem than 'Jock o' Hazeldean' on the same theme, but told without incident, inwardly; and a far greater composition, both melodically and poetically than the oversung 'Annie Laurie'. The poem is by Susanna Blamire, and I wish I knew more of her.

And ye shall walk in silk attire  
 And siller ha'e to spare,  
 Gin ye'll consent to be my bride  
 Nor think on Donald mair . . .  
 Oh wha would buy a silken gown  
 Wi a puir broken heart  
 Or what's to me a siller crown  
 Gin frae my love I part?

The mind whose meanest wish is pure  
 Far dearer is to me,  
 And e'er I'm forced to break my faith  
 I'll lay me doon and dee.  
 For I hae vowed a virgin's vow  
 My lover's fate to share,  
 And he has given to me his heart  
 And what can man do mair?

His mind and manners won my heart,  
 He, grateful, took the gift,  
 And did I wish to see it back  
 It would be waur than theft:  
 For longest life can n'er repay  
 The love he bears to me.  
 And e'er I'm forced to break my faith  
 I'll lay me doon and dee.

This is honest, passionate love, and for its equal we must look no lower than 'auld Robin Gray' and some of Burns' love lyrics. The air to it is one of the loveliest and least-known of Scottish tunes. It is smooth and flexible, expressive and tender, but requires a range of nearly two octaves. It should be mournful but not too sweet—there is sternness in the words. This singular tune has a wonderfully subtle manner with the poem, which is written as a dialogue, but is in reality a soliloquy, the girl answering dumb inward temptation with honest

faithfulness—‘it would be waur than theft’. And this slow but passionate argument is beautifully conveyed in the air, which seems somehow to follow a little way behind the words, like the girl’s own pondering heart.

I can give two interesting examples of songs interchanging or stealing airs from one another. No doubt there are a great many more than the two I know. The first is ‘Golden Slumbers’ a seventeenth century song which Boosey gives in his collection. But the air to which ‘Golden Slumbers’ is sung belongs to another old and finer poem which is as charming a lyric as Waller or Herrick ever wrote—‘Of Music’. I do not know the poet. If he be not anonymous, I should be glad of his name.

Of music and of Beauty’s power  
 I doubted much and doubted long,  
 The fairest face a gaudy flower,  
 An empty sound the sweetest song.

But when her voice Clarinda raised,  
 And sang so sweet and looked so gay;  
 At once I listened and I gazed,  
 And looked and heard my heart away.

A prettier description of falling in love with a beautiful voice has never been written. The other song has an interesting legend attached to it: the fine old air to which too many tender tenors sing Moore’s ‘Endearing Young Charms’ belongs by prior claim to Sir William Davenant’s ‘My lodging is on the cold ground’ which is in his play ‘The Rivals’ and was first played in 1668. The singer was, according to the legend, Nell Gwynne, and by her rendering she was supposed to have attracted Charles II. Nell must have been something of a revue star, for her performances included dancing, acting, fooling, and singing—which last talent it is not often remembered she possessed. The tradition that she sang ‘My Lodging is on the cold ground’ before Charles is obscure but persistent: but at least if she did it cannot be true that by it, she won his affections, for some time before the year 1668, Pepys notes that royalty had ‘sent for Nelly’. Anyone may read this lyric in ‘The Rivals’, but it is not outstanding.

A quantity of spuriously country songs were written in the nineteenth century; but their falseness to the old harmonious tradition was betrayed in sickly words and sentimental, mawkish 'accompaniments'. One great one has survived which I have previously mentioned—Bishop's 'The Bloom is on the Rye'. It is not the lyric, but the enchanting air which has carried this down to us—for it far outdoes the words, and truly matches the English spirit of an ageless day. Its sound sweetness, its singableness, and a haunting unnameable quality of blissful sadness in it make it a reversion almost to the bewitching music of 'Sweet Nightingale.' For though we have our own gay and our roystering songs such as 'Little Brown Jug', 'There is a Tavern in the Town', and 'John Peel' the persistently mis-worded—they are not so typically English as our sweet and melancholy ones. What is the source of this companionable sadness in the anonymous English heart? I think it was the terms of its existence. A life of bitter labour and poverty, eased and released from animalism only by the sublime in nature, in which it evolved. The English genius is eyes, is senses—the toiler proved magnificently that he *saw* and that he knew he saw. The Scottish songs go deeper into the mind and the Welsh into the spiritual content of man; but the English go into the Earth. The earth which means sadness, slavery, and death, but also means revival, renewal, was the theme of the labourer's joy and song. He timed his love, he set his feasts to it, it quietened his anguish to melancholy. Almost every song or ballad contained the face of the earth. In the 'Banks of Allan Water' occurs the lovely, poetic line

'Where brown autumn spread his store'

which reminds one of a Miltonic image, and has also a peasant's strong sense of the Yield in it. The fact is, the English were singers, amazing as it may seem now. Although I do not think it likely that they sang at their labour quite as spontaneously or as often as the pastoral-educated Arcadian poets imagined—the labour was too breath-taking. While milking or thatching perhaps—but who could plough with oxen, who ditch, who hedge, who thresh with the flail, and sing? Singing and sweating are not a pair. But never natural beauty went by

unnoticed. They kept a journal with their eyes, and in their holidays sang it over. The companionship of the earth was sublime and homely, and constant. From the rising of the morning star when they began work, to the rough hearthside at night where they slept by the wood ashes like Milton's 'lubberly fiend'; from light's first tinge of shape, to the dark dilemma of night, weariness, and hunger, creation pure was all around them, not as a spectacle but as an ingredient of existence. They talked much when they held holidays and their gossip got into their songs and airs and humanized them. Many of the old English songs contain stories of what must have been famous incidents, like 'The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington'. And the melodies that met and married these old ballads and country lyrics were in their very plainness, compelling. In them music, eternal music, so vast, so immortally spaceous, that possibly not even the mind of a Bach or a Beethoven has approached its rims, became human and sympathetic.

\* \* \*  
*(to be continued)*

# HISTORY IN DREAMS

(The Hidden Life of Archbishop Laud)

---

JACK LINDSAY

WILLIAM LAUD was born in October, 1573, son of a master-tailor of Reading. Blessing his school master for his severity, he left the Reading Grammar School with a corporation scholarship to Oxford. Slowly he rose in the world. Fellow of St. John's, Grammar Reader, deacon, priest, Divinity Lecturer, Proctor, Chaplain to the Earl of Devon, vicar, advowson, chaplain to the Bishop of Rochester. In 1609 he gave his first sermon before James I, and next year but one he was King's Chaplain. Dumpy Little Will was well on his way to greatness and the block.

He kept a Diary, which later fell into the hands of his accuser, the ear-cropt Prynne, and which was extensively used in the trial. We have it in 'a Summary of his Life, extracted for the most part out of his owne Diary, written with his own hand, and found in his Pocket upon search of his Chamber in the Tower'. In his records he paid special attention to his dreams, and so we possess an intimate account of his anxieties and desires, which has considerable psychological interest and also throws light on the image-formations of seventeenth century poetry.

Laud, 'my little good Lord,' suffered from bad health all his life. 'In his Infancy he was like to perish of a disease (as he writes), but that God reserved him to bee a future scourge, yea plague to the Church and State, and for another kind of Death.' He was accident-prone and alternated mishap and illness. 'A most fierce salt-rheum in my left eye, like to have endangered it.' 'That night I returned, being become lame on a sudden through I know not what humour, falling down upon my left leg, or, as R. An. thought, by the biting of bugs.' An unfortunate man. 'I fell suddenly dead for a time at Wickham.' 'My horse trod on my foot and lamed me.' 'I fell down,

I know not how, in the parlour of St. John's College, and hurt my left shoulder and hip.' His left side seems particularly open to attack. 'I was sore plucked with this sickness.' 'A most grievous burning fever.' He has odd ideas of exercise, and they lead to disaster. 'I was forced to put on a trusse for a rupture, I know not how occasioned, unlesse it were with swinging of a booke for my exercise in private.' Then, in 1641, 'Sunday after Sermon, as I was walking up and downe my Chamber before dinner, without any flip or treading awry, the sinnew of my right leg gave a great cracke, and brake asunder in the same place where I had broken it before February 5. 1628. It was two months before I could goe out of my Chamber.'

These accidents persist throughout his life—at least from April, 1619, when the 'falling dead' at Wickham is recorded. Beyond doubt they are bound up with his general condition of anxiety, which in turn grows more and more bound up with his sense of danger, of impending attack, in the political sphere. Thus, in March, 1629, a paper was found in the Dean of Paul's yard, which declared, 'Laud, look to thyself; be assured thy life is sought. As thou art the fountain of all wickedness, repent thee of thy monstrous sins, before thou be taken out of this world, and assure thyself neither God nor the world can endure such a vile counsellor to live or such a whisperer.' On reading these words, Laud wrote, 'Lord, I am a grievous sinner; but I beseech thee, deliver my soul from them that hate me without a cause.' And promptly broke down; for almost his next entry mentions that a serious illness had confined him to his house and kept him from the sunshine of the Court till late in the year.<sup>1</sup>

Laud never showed the least interest in women; but a number of shadowy (male) figures flit through his diary, generally causing an undefined trouble. 'My next unfortunateness was by S.B., Feb. 11, 1611.' Then there is unfortunateness with S.S. An E.B. comes in during 1622–4. 'Friday, E.B. came to London. He had not leisure to speak with me, though

<sup>1</sup> An earlier instance occurs in 1610, when Buckeridge, Laud's old tutor, now President of St. Johns, died. Laud wanted to fill his place, but found many opponents, who tried to set the King against him. Laud fell ill. 'In the midst of my sickness the suit about the presidency of St. Johns began.'

I sent an offer to wait all opportunities, till June 16.' His name once half-slips out, 'My ill hap with E. Beg., June, 1618.' We shall meet him later in Laud's dreams. Prynne makes no bones about his interpretation of such relationships. Speaking of an unfortunate marriage-transaction in which Laud officiated, he says, 'On which very day of the Moneth, An. 1609, he fell into another grievous sin, perhaps uncleannessse, with E.M.'

Laud, in his continuous condition of anxiety, pays much attention to dreams and omens. 'He took special notice of sundry Dreameſ, Presageſ and Omens of his own downfall,' says Prynne, and at one and the same moment attacks Laud as superstitious and himself accepts the truth of the signs. 'What a superstitious observer, and diligent Register he was, of his owne idle dreameſ: and how ominous ſome of them have proved.' Laud refers (1625) to 'the discourse which my Lord Duke (Buckingham) had with me about Witches and Astrologers.' The smallest out-of-the-way happening strikes him as possibly carrying some message, and he jots it down. 'Two robin redbreasts flew together through the door into my study, as if one pursued the other. That ſudden motion almost ſtartled me. I was then preparing a ſermon on Ephes. IV, 30, and ſtudying.' (The text runs: And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are ſealed until the day of redempcion.)

When we turn to the dreams, we find a predominance of the theme of Death. Laud in his dreams keeps on killing people off; and without much fear of wronging him, we can see in this fact an extreme anxiety using the deathwish against a difficult world. Sometimes the figure is blank, and the whole unruly space of man is desolated. 'I dreamed of the buriall of I know not whom, and that I stood by the dust and I awaked ſorrowfull' (21st December, 1626). At other times we can see clearly enough that a strong antagonism is involved.

Thus, Laud had a keen struggle with Williams, Bishop of Lincoln and Lord Keeper. He did his unscrupulous best to ruin Williams in Buckingham's opinions, and found his dirty work recoiling on his own head; so he kills Williams off in his dreams.

#### HISTORY IN DREAMS

(1623) Decemb. 14. Sunday night I dreamt that L.K. (Williams) was dead. That I passed by one of his men, that was about a monument for him: That I heard him say, his lower lippe was infinitely swollen, and fallen, and he rotten already. This dream did much trouble me.

On Monday morning I went about businesse to my L.D. of Buckingham: we had speech in the Sheeld-Gallery at White-Hall: There I found that L.K. had strangely forgotten himself to him: and I thinke he was dead in his affections.

Deecember 27. I was with my L.D. of Buck. I found that all went not right with L.K. etc. He sent to speak with me because he was to receive the next day.

January 11. My L.K. met me in the withdrawing Chamber, and quarreled with me gratis.

Janu. 14. I acquainted my L.D. of Buck. with that which passed between L.K. and me.

Febr. 6. My Lord D. of Buckingham told me of the Reconciliation of L.K. the day before.

Febr. 18. he told me of the reconciliation and submission of L.K. And that it was confessed into him, that his favour to me was a chief cause. Invidia quo tendis etc. At ille de novo feedus pepigit.

March 17. L.K. his complimenting with me, etc.

This entry shows how the Lord Keeper was the main theme of Laud's thoughts during the months in question, and that the dream of his death was unmistakeably a simple deathwish. Laud's effort to explain the meaning away by seeing the death as a symbol of Williams's dying-in-affection towards the Duke is in the key of his own evasive and none-too-truthful character.

Other dreams show the deathwish directed against persons whom we cannot place, but who, for some reason or other, had become entangled in Laud's suspicious emotional life:

(1625) September 11. I dreamed that Mr Theodore Price admonished me concerning Ma: and that he was unfaithfull towards me, and revealed all the things which he knew, and that I should beware of him, and no more etc. Afterwards I dreamed of Jack Croe, that he was dead of the Plague, when as he had not beene long with the King.

With such a deep-rooted tendency to wield the dream-death-wish there was naturally a trick of imagining (in his dreamlife) that any deaths in his environment were his work. So, when

his faithful servant Pennell fell ill, Laud finished him off during sleep:

This morning between four or five of the clock, lying at Hampton Court, I dreamed that I was going out in haste, and that when I came into my outer Chamber, there was my servant Wi. Pennell, in the same riding suit which he had on that day sevennight at Hampton Court with me. Methought I wandered to see him, for I left him sick at home, and asked him how he did and what he made there, and that he answered me, he came to receive my blessing; and with that fell on his knees; that hereupon I laid my hand on his head and prayed over him, and therewith awaked. When I was up, I told this to them of my Chamber and added that I should find Pennell dead or dying. My coach came; and when I came home, I found him past sense and giving up the ghost. So my prayers, as they had frequently before, commended him to God.

Again, at times the dreams conjure up the dead and re-enact their departure. Shortly after James I died, Laud saw him:

(1625) July 3. King James appeared to ~~me~~ in Dreames; I saw him only swiftly passing by. He was of a cheerfull and serene countenance: in the passage he saw me, beckned to me, smiled, and was suddenly withdrawn out of my sight.

There is another important theme in the dreams, less central than that of Death, but continually modifying it: that of Marriage (with Birth-imagery closely associated). One very interesting dream merges the themes of death and life with subtle effect:

(1625) September 26. I dreamed of the marriage of I know not whom at Oxford: all Present flourished with green garments. I knew none but Thomas Flaxney, presently after, without any wakening, that I know of, I saw the Bishop of Worcester, having his head covered with linnen cloathes. He friendly persuaded me, that I would dwell with them, at the place where the Marches of Wales were then kept; but not expecting my answer himself answered, that he knew I could not live so meanly.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This dream comes shortly after Laud and Buckingham had managed to get Williams dismissed from the Lord Keepership (after the dissolution of Parliament in August). By getting rid of Williams Laud ensured his power under Charles I. (In the dream the Bishop seems to have a dual role—Death contrasted with Love and Life; the Death that Laud feels to lurk in sex, but also the Death which threatens the ambitious celibate.)

Thomas Flaxney is introduced for his name: *Flax*. He provides the transition between the green revellers, the fertility-dancers of the marriage-rite, and the linen of the Bishop with its suggestion of a death-shroud. Laud says that some part of himself would like to join the common revellers, who mate and are happy; but he cannot accept such a mean destiny. He fights for preferment in the Church, puts aside marriage, and aims at high and lonely power.

And we get a closer statement of much the same theme in a dream where his Mother appears:

(1627) January 6. I dreamed in the night that my Mother, dead long before, stood by my bedside, and drawing the Curtaine a little looked cheerfully on me. I was glad to see her look so merrily. After that she shewed me an old man dead long before, whom I knew, and loved whiles he lived. He seemed to have lain on the ground, merry enough, but with a wrinkled face, his name was Grove, whilst I prepared to salute him, I awaked.

Here again he looks out on a different sort of life and refuses the invitation. (The Mother's drawing of the Curtain may be taken as both an image of birth and as a call to the rising of the flesh.) *Grove* seems to have the same significance as *Flax*. The man, a father-surrogate, lies on the earth in a gesture that can represent either death or mating: the jolly spirit of the earth, the returning indomitable green. 'Whilst I prepared to salute him. I awaked.'

Now we can look at a set of dreams dealing with the shadowy (male) figures. Here the main emotion is a simple anxiety-fear of loss. Laud is always the one left out, the one who misses an appointment, who fails to partake in the common life which Flaxney and Grove represented.

(1633) Aprill 13. The great meeting at the Counsell Table, etc. when the Earle of Holland made his submission to the King.

May 13. Munday I set out of London to attend King Charles into Scotland.

May 24. The Kinge was to enter into Yorke in State.

June 6. I came to Berwick: that night I dreamed, that K.B. sent to me in Westminster Church; that he was now as desirous to see me as I him; and that hee was then entring into the Church. I went with

hope, but met another in the middle of the Church, who seemed to know the busesse, and laughed, but K.B. was not there.

Whitsun Eve. I received Letters from K.B. unalterable, etc. By this if I returned, I shall see how true or false my Dreame is, etc.

The same dream-motive attends L.M. St. There is a brief period of happiness followed by one of Laud's anxiety-accidents, and then the dream of loss:

(1636) August 3. Wednesday night towards the morning I dreamed that L.M. St. came to me the next day and shewed me all the kindnesse I could aske. And that Thursday August 4. he did come and was very kind towards me . . .

August 19. Friday I was in great hazard of breaking my right Legge . . .

October 14. Friday night I dreamed marvelously that the King was offended with me, and would cast me off, and tell me no cause why. Avertat Deus, for cause I have given none.

November 20. Sunday night my fearefull dreame, Master Cib brought me word etc.

December 24. Saturday night Christmas Eve: that night I dreamed I went to seeke M.St. and found him with his Mother sitting in the roome, it was a faire Chamber, he went away, and I went after, but missed him, and after tyred my selfe extremely but neither could I find him, not so much as the house again.

Here the Mother intervenes to spoil everything.<sup>1</sup> Another time Laud manages to halt the marriage of one of his friends:

(1638) Tuesday, Feb. 12. That night I dreamed that K.C. was to be married to a minister's widow; And that I was called upon to do it. No Serivce-Book could be found; and in my owne Booke, which I had, I could not find the Order for Marriage.

Much the same emotional attitude appears in the dreams about Buckingham. Laud's desire to grapple the Duke to him-

<sup>1</sup> In the entries about E.B. we find the mixture of death and mating—the deathwish aimed against the man who leaves Laud to wed E.B. was married May Day, 1624, 'the sign in Pisces.' He visited Laud in dreams, and a year later something which he thus forecast to Laud came to pass. And that night R.B. sickened to the death.' Under May, 1624: 'I was marvellously troubled with E.B. before they came to London, that there was much declining to speak with me.' On 16th June, Laud took leave of E.B. forever.

self takes an open love-tinct, with final displacement of the Duke's wife.

(1625) August 21. I stayed at Brecon in Wales: that night in a dreame the Duke of Buckingham seemed to me to ascend into my bed; where he carried himself with much love towards me; after such rest wherein wearied men are wont exceedingly to rejoice: And likewise many seemed to me to enter the Chamber who did see this. Not many days before, I seemed to see the Dutches of Buckingham that Excellent Lady, in a dream: at first was much perplexed about her husband, but afterwards merry, and rejoicing, that she was freed from the feare of abortion: that in due time she might be a mother again . . .

September 4. I was very much troubled by dreames. The Duke of Buckingham, hix servants and family, wholly took me up. All things were not well ordered; the Dutches being ill, calls out to her maids, and goeth to bed. *Det Deus meliora.*

Under 27th March, 1627, we read how George Wright, dead about two years, appears. Wright had been Laud's 'familiar acquaintance', serving under Buckingham when the Duke was Master of the Horse; and Laud had got letters from the Duke to help the executor of Wright's estate.

He seemed to me very handsome, and merry enough. I told him what I had done for his Wife and Children: he considering with himself a little, answered that the Executor had satisfied him with those legacies whiles he was living and presently looking into some paper in his Study adjoyning, he added againe, that it was so. And moreover he whispered me in the eare; That I was the chief cause why the Bishop of Lincolne should not againe be admitted into favour, and into the Court.

We are now back in the anxieties of court-intrigue and antagonism to Williams.

(1633) July 13. Friday, that night at Anderweeke, I dreamed that L.L. (the Bishop of Lincolne) came and offered to sit above me at the counsell table, and that L.H. came and placed him there.

In the following sequence we find the political fears mixed with anxieties over personal relationship, and ending in a nightmare of disguised castration-imagery. Windebank, into whose house Laud takes the King in the dream, was a close friend of his. It was at his house that Laud fell into a bad fever

after the threatening paper found in the Dean of Paul's yard; and in 1632, Laud managed to get him, an obscure clerk in the signet office, appointed to the high office of Secretaryship of State—an unpopular appointment which caused much indignation.

(1627) January 13. The Bishop of Lincolne desired reconciliation with the Duke of Buckingham, etc.

Jan. 14. Towards the morning, I dreamed that the Bishop of Lincoln, I know not with whom, came with iron chaines, but returning freed from them, he leaped upon a horse, departed neither could I overtake him.

January 16. I dreamed that the King went out of a standing, and that when he was hungry I led him away at unawares into the house of Francis Windebancke my friend. Whiles he prepared to eat I, whiles other were absent, held the Cup to him after the accustomed manner: I brought beere, but it pleased him not, I brought some againe but in a silver Cup; the most Gracious King said: Thou knowest alwayes I drink out of a Glasse; I went againe, and awaked.

Janu. 17. I shewed resonys to the King why the Papers of the deceased Bishop of Winchester, concerning Bishops, that they are Jure Divino, were to be printed, contrary to that which the Bishop of Lincolne, miserably, and to the great detriment of the Church signified to the King, as the King Himselfe had told me formerly.

Febr. 7. I dreamed in the night, that I was sick of the Scurvey, and that all my teeth were sodainly loose, especially one in my lower jaw-bone, which I could hardly keep in with my finger, untill I might get help, etc.

Febr. 20. John Fenton began the cure of a certaine itch, etc.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Rushworth (*Historical Collections*, 1659, p. 421) saw the political relations of this dream. After telling how Williams was charged in the Star-Chamber, he goes on, 'Bishop Laud, not long before this passage with the Bishop of Lincoln, was informed, that the Bishop of Lincoln endeavored to be reconciled to the Duke; and that night he was so informed, he dreamed, *That the Bishop of Lincoln came with Iron Chains, but returned freed from them: That he leaped upon a Horse, departed, and he could not overtake him*. The Interpretation of his Dream may (not unjustly) be thus applied. His Chains might signify the imprisonment of the Bishop of Lincoln afterwards in the *Tower*; his returning free, to his being set at *Liberty* again at the meeting of the Parliament; his leaping on *Hors-back*, and departing; to his going into *Wales*, and there commanding a Troop in the Parliaments Service; and that Bishop Laud could not overtake him, might portent that himself should become a prisoner on the same place . . . The sober Rushworth thus takes the dream as a serious prophecy of future events, but is right in seeing it as direct reaction to politics, expressing Laud's wish to shackle Williams.

Here the inability to find the right cup or vessel shows an anxiety linked with the fear of missing the loved one in previous dreams. Laud, who had dreamed four years before that the Bishop of Lincoln was dead with 'infinitely swollen under lip' has the image retorted on himself, in the common castration-symbolism of falling teeth (which always has a strong sexual guilt-element). The mouth-imagery is further linked up with the motive of the King drinking in the close friend's house.

To complete the tale, we find a handful of anxiety-dreams related directly to the worsening political situation, as Laud neared the scaffold. On the last day of January, 1629, 'I lay in Court. I dreamed that I put off my Rochet all save one sleeve, and when I would have put it on againe, I could not finde it.'<sup>1</sup> In 1639, on 24th January, he dreamed that his Father, who had died forty-six years before, came to him, 'and to my thinking he was as well, and as cheerful as ever I saw him: He asked me what I did there? And after some speech, I asked him how long he would stay with me? He answered, he would stay till he had me along with him. I am not moved with Dreames, yet I thought fit to remember this.' The deathwish is coming home to roost.

On 2nd November, 1642, Laud dreamed that Parliament was removed to Oxford, and the Church undone. 'Some old Courtiers came in to see me and feared; I went to Saint Johns, and there I found the rooofe of some part of the Colledge and the Walls cleft, and ready to fall downe.' (On October, 1640, he had gone into his upper study for some manuscripts to be sent to Oxford, and found his 'picture, taken by the life', fallen upon its face on the floor. 'I am almost every day threatened with my ruine in Parliament, God grant this be no Omen.')

On 10th March, 1643, we find the one dream which is something like a simple wish-fulfilment, 'This night preceding I dreamed a warrant was sent to free me, and that I speake to Master Lieutenant that my Warder might keep the keys of

<sup>1</sup> The Rochet was an emblem of Episcopacy (e.g. John Eliot, 'Give me a preacher . . . who rayles not at Rochets . . . Nor troubleth the Church with new Factions,' *Poems*, 1658); but also here a mother-symbol (Mother-Church)—Laud loses the womb-shelter and is open to attack (George Herbert, *The British Church*, 'I joy, deare Mother, when I view Thy perfect lineaments,' etc.)

my Lodgings till I had got some place for my selfe and my stiffe, since I could not goe to Lambeth; I waked and slept againe and had the very same dreame, a second time.' But even here there is an anxious awareness that, though he gets out, he has lost his palatial place of power.

Prynne, not to be undone as a gatherer of omens, added his own list of presages foreshadowing Laud's downfall. When Laud had the parish-church of St. Gregory pulled down, Prynne had declared that the act prophesied the fall of Popery in England (since Pope Gregory had founded the See of Canterbury). When Laud made his Visitation in 1635, he ended at Barkin Church next to the gate of the Tower of London; and so Prynne, then a prisoner in the Tower, prophesied that the Archbishop would come right into the Tower on his next visitation—'which accordingly came to passe: The Arch-bishope sitting at Church in the Tower Chappell in the same seat, where Master Prynne usually sate dureing his imprisonment.' Also, four iron Vanes had been set up on the highest Tower of Canterbury Cathedral to celebrate the war against the Scots in 1639; and on Innocents Day following, the one decorated with Laud's arms was struck down in a storm. Finally, Laud when a scholar at Oxford had dreamed that he would reach high preferment in the Church and power in the State, but would finally be hanged.<sup>1</sup>

Laud took these charges seriously. He protested that 'Dreams were not in the power of him that hath them, but in the unruliness of the fancy, which in broken sleep, wanders which way it pleases, and shapes what it pleaseth.' He hotly

<sup>1</sup> For completeness, let me add the dream of 8th March, 1627, when he imagined that he had been reconciled to the Church of Rome. 'This distracted me, and I wondred much whenced it hapned; being troubled at the scandall; and this my fall, which would weaken many excellent and learned men in the Church of England. Thus troubled in my dreame, I said with my self, that I would presently goe, and making confeson, ask Pardon of the Church of England. As I was going to doe it, a certaine Priest met me, and would hinder me; but being moved with indignation, I went on my way; and when I had wearied myselfe with waywardes cogitations, I awaked. I felt such impressions, that I could scarce beleeve I had dreamed.' The 'fall' he wants to confess may not be that stated in the dream, in which he takes up the common political accusation and uses it to mask a deeper fear.

denied the dream of his young Oxford days. He never dreamed he was hanged, so the dream cannot be used to hang him. He says that he once told the Earl of Pembroke the dream was a fiction; but now, as the Earl has too short a memory to recall the denial, may God forgive him.

There is yet one more example of Laud's oddities, which is perhaps the oddest of them all. He had a habit of jotting down anything that came into his head, a kind of surrealist word-doodle. Unfortunately Prynne only gives us a glimpse of the things that Laud wrote in this vein; but they are enough to make clear what a fascinating thing the whole text would be. How peculiar an eventuality, if a large body of Laud's secret scribblings had been preserved to his own personal shame and to his future acclamation as an important precursor of the surrealists!

You have here an end both of his Diary, and Projects registered therein, his *Ludicra* written with his owne hand, should follow, but they are so Childish, scurilous, ridiculous, for the most part (as:

He dwelt within a stones cast of her. O come kisse me Archdeacon. Who gave you those Breeches? My Godfathers and my Godmothers. Jonas in a Quailies belly, that is a little bird, the miracle is the greater. Now, Person, Quota est whora? Its not one by my Diall. I doubt it is past 1? by yours: John Dod how doth your Unkle? Which Sir. My Unkle doth very ill upon the Commandements. The Welshmens beginning from Spanish Oares and New-Gate Theeves. The boy said to his Father you are Gods Fiddle, etc. . . .)

that they could but wast and defile paper, such pure devout Archiprelaticall Recreations are they, and so unlike to what Paul prescribes, Ephesians 5.3.4.

There are many felicities of phrase in Laud's account of his dreams—for instance, in the picture of James gliding by and then suddenly withdrawn. Laud himself had scant interest in poems. When the Duchess of Buckingham gave him a copy of some woman's Devotions, he commented, 'All was mean in it; nothing extraordinary; unless it was more like to poetry.' But in his dream-stories we see a genuine poetic activity, linked at times in its pictorial appositions to the devices of the Emblem Books. It is an activity forced down below the conscious levels,

where it finds dream-symbols for the ruling anxiety and whence it irrupts in the restless word-doodling. All controls are cast aside, and Laud light-heartedly accepts the insoluble contradictions as jests.

In this movement of his mind Laud expresses something fundamental in his period. The Renascence Rhetoric is breaking up and taking certain special emphases in the dialectic of the Metaphysical Poets, with a new sort of symbolic concentration; and at the same time there is released from below a new fantasy-form of verse, the Medley, the Non-Sequitur, the Non-Sense Poem, the Vagary or Rhapsody, which often uses as tangled a skein of association as appears in Laud's *ludicra*. In these developments we see a culture in violent throes of transition; and the fact that in the dreams and jottings of Laud, one of the main political storm-centres of the age, we find this pattern, is highly interesting. We see in life itself the same patterns as we see in the poets, and touch the deep formative levels of the spirit.

# POETRY

---

## SAILORS ON THE MOVING LAND

*(to Dylan Thomas)*

by VERNON WATKINS

I sing the eternal allegory of the trivial date,  
The morning's razor-blades, the shears of Fate:  
The last words of a mummy wound  
With casual daylight grown profound  
And glitter like a letter on a plate.

Signs of the Zodiac, and the slow degrees  
Marked on the sundial, stones and holy trees  
Turn with the stars; the turning grains  
Whirl through the archway of the trains,  
Leaving this music of the tunnelled seas.

Footprints know imminent midnight out of reach.  
The sun divides men, making each  
Perfect in his own aura,  
Inclined to future terror,  
Wings of the unknown vultures on the beach.

A footbeat on the stone may stir the screech-  
Owl in the darkness when the arclights bleach  
The expectation on a face  
Anchored in a waiting-place.  
Who knows what feet, hurrying through day's delaying,  
Pausing at dusk, may stumble on a saying  
That only night could teach?

A cry at dusk, the cry of children playing,  
Hiding, running to hide,  
Across the pavings  
Running to hide, or staying,

One counting, staying by the wall with anchorite's eyes,  
 Counting, weighing  
 Green light, green earth above the grey sea's ravings;  
 Walled from the edge of that estranging tide,  
 The young feet dancing kiss  
 Thought, and the tombstone's quarrelling silences;  
 They scatter, they dancing are still, where the watcher flies,  
 Pausing; then is  
 The grinning skull at rest, and the tomb's engravings  
 Green, blotted out by birth. O the leaping foot  
 Is light upon misers' loot  
 And the night is sold for pennies.

Sitting in rows with manna-crumbs to eat,  
 The people wait. But here there is no seat.  
 Through the lopped trees the dividing sun is bright.  
 Levelling the pavings in the way of tombs  
 Under the ragged ravens of Elijah Street,  
 It speaks the common language of the unwrinkled sheet,  
 Then drops. Deep darkness looms,  
 Rising. Then, then, through night  
 Men touch; they climb the eerie parapet.  
 Nothing is changed; the paving-stones are white;  
 But the stones move towards them where they meet.

The little deaths in the fishmonger's move,  
 Images of distracted love;  
 Then one man hurries on the theft  
 Of following feet, and one is left  
 In masking darkness with his robber's glove.

‘I have a bicycle that is not mine.’

‘The round moon racing through the clouds is fine.’

‘I have seen Lamprey's marble crossed by eels.’

‘Must we be mastered by the moving wheels?’

So to the inner smoke, the quarrelling air,  
 Angry jolting of a chair,  
 Edge of the darkness' knife; confessions of despair.

The water-skin has made all eyes oblique.  
 Another door, another door they seek,  
 Or tilted barrel turning round  
 To raise the questions of the drowned.  
 Yes, there are words the living cannot speak.

The bitter mermaid sang her worst  
 Neither throat could slake its thirst.

The crawling lobster moves about,  
 Then the eye of foam goes out.

Two sailors on the moving land,  
 By the estranging sea, we met;  
 And the salt mermaid cried:  
 Give what you hide into each other's hand,  
 Give what you hide.

We passed an eye as talkers pass a saying,  
 And where our seats were set  
 In smoke of bitten cigarette  
 Circling the bitter words  
 Hauling the room of cords,  
 The hand was giving and the heart was praying,  
 The heart was giving and the hand was praying.  
 'We are caught in that encircling sea  
 And whirlpool of philosophy,  
 And I can feel that someone pulls the net.'

The bitter mermaid sang. We heard  
 The screaming woman-breasted bird.

Tritons of the sea shed tears,  
 But you, with terror in your head,

Shook philosophy out of your ears,  
Snatched a great light, and said:

'I have a cage of darkness, hiding . . .  
The great white innocent bird, the albatross,  
And where the waters toss,  
This way and that way riding  
White horses of the cradle or the fosse  
To wordless islands and the One-Eyed Man,  
I know the horrible gulf from which we ran.  
Speak, if you know the place where speech began.'

'Flying with that hilarious foam for hair,  
Their manes of mystery,  
Hooves of the guilty sea,  
Cross and re-cross, words that deny a word,  
Under the still, the steady-moving bird,  
A stone uniting birthday and death-rate,  
And we must wait  
For the first cry of birth, the bird's cry answered late  
In the eyes' word the dying would not spare.  
To-night all words are deluged from the slate:  
When will the shell close on the beak of air?'

The gannet dropping on his bait  
Hits the water, and is late.

Two eyes upon the one side of a fish  
Pronounce a dead fear and an unborn wish,  
But speculation in the deep, dark sea is devilish.  
O who would speculate, or compare  
Objects in the upper air?  
In the abyssal deeps, all light is darkness there.

Moving, and at a loss for words,  
Inside the sea-doors, near the moving hands,  
We felt the labyrinth of the herds  
Moving to no fixed place, yet in their rout  
Fine in their praise of lands,

Slow, docile giants with a bison's urge,  
 Met from cockcrow and mating-shout,  
 Their faces cut with diamonds,  
 Crosses of grief, betraying bonds,  
 Yet moving slowly like a town  
 Barnacled with ruin,  
 Moving enormous like a waterspout  
 Among the moving surge.

Against the raft of this rocked shore  
 Sea-dragons, monsters, tower and pounce ;  
 They drain the blood of every door;  
 Shrinking from the scalloped shore  
 They drink the mountains, ounce by ounce.

Is not the microcosm of Townhill falling  
 Mirrored in glasses lifted on a tray,  
 Mixed with the voices calling, fading, calling,  
 Part of the evening flooding Swansea Bay,  
 Lives for the fisher-bird that feeds on loss,  
 Guarding the surface that no mind can cross?

Multitudinous darkness, the held flight  
 Of sailors' parrots that talk all tongues,  
 Loot and traffic of the night,  
 Golden rings and ladder-rungs  
 Of embarkation in the dark,  
 A talking madhouse where night raves  
 Pulled by the force of wind and waves  
 Beating the door, the door and floor of dark,  
 Beating and meeting, meeting, beating  
 The windows of the ark,  
 The huge seas rising, huger seas retreating.

Time. Time. Time. Time.  
 Thunderbolts of death and birth.  
 Thunderbolts of rut and rout.  
 How many from the contemporary tomb

Who had found warmth and comfort here, stepped out  
To the stampeding Earth.

So from Oystermouth's nets of Wales  
Followed by the fishes' tails  
And every print and spoor of grief,  
Where the dull trees were lopped of every leaf  
We climbed through darkness where you danced about,  
Gay as a babbling thief.

Oystermouth Castle floated round  
A sea of undulating ground.  
Two moon-flung shadows, bent to steal  
The navel-stone no man had found,  
Zigzagged uphill, fell flat across the wheel.

Two with a bicycle, two men with horns.  
Two shadowed quarrellers pushing two moons.

And morning, morning, morning followed fleet;  
The playing pavings, gathering flying feet,  
Hammered the dark of eyelids closed beneath their sunny  
sheet.

Sleep, and retreat from oracles. Midnight,  
An anchorite praying,  
Refuses dawn, refuses to-morrow.  
The lips stammer against the light.  
Sleep holds them, forming the oracle, saying :  
'Able to touch'. I woke up, saying,  
'I was able to touch his sorrow.'

## TO MY SON

. by GEORGE BARKER

Will those, my son, who love us most  
 Ever, this sad side of the ghost,  
 Be satisfied that they ask  
 Enough of us? The Augean task  
 Faces every one who is able  
 To sit down at a loving table:  
 Just as the ice-hearted stars  
 Stand around like avatars  
 Knowing that every cosmic crime  
 Will come again in its good time.  
 And I have seen, with bloodshot eyes,  
 Across the principalities  
 Mopping and mowing on a far region  
 The visage of the demigorgon.  
 O heavy-handed seraph, smooth  
 The lying pillow with a truth:  
 Coiling, a sheet of kisses stirs  
 On liars in their sepulchres.  
 Rise, babe, and gibber on the cross  
 Where dissimulation was,  
 Until in its proper season  
 A skull steps from the Hill, of Venus.  
 My son, I delegate you all  
 The prizes of the temporal  
 If I give to you a heart  
 In which the human has no part:  
 But since, my dear son, you breathe,  
 Hop your own skip. Underneath  
 The human heart, as I believe,  
 Lives a god who cannot grieve  
 No matter how disastrous  
 The crime our passion brings on us  
 Because this ungrieving god  
 Knows that either bad or good

Might look, from a better angle,  
 Like a double-headed angel.  
 Nevertheless, how can we,  
 The victims of crashed astrology,  
 We, O how can we look down  
 And see the heart that was our own  
 Guzzled, with whimpers, by the bitch  
 Because she loves? And of us, which  
 One never, in the street, like dog,  
 Mounted desire? O pedagogue,  
 You can teach that Justice is  
 Exacted on us, but to us  
 Justice is what we do, because  
 We remember what innocence was.  
 I shall not ever here again  
 Look on your sleep, my dear son,  
 With the whole raindrop of the sky  
 Cradled in your covered eye  
 And every sweet beast of creation  
 Standing around in its station  
 Because the child and animals  
 Know nothing of these enigmas,—  
 The seven, singing, orthodox  
 Damnations of the bloody rocks:  
 Know nothing, sweet son and green lamb  
 Of the Satanic 'I am'  
 That opens up a sea of wrath  
 And shows us the golden path  
 To that glass palace where Love  
 Keeps her prize pigs. Let me leave  
 Now, as evenings eyelashes  
 Hide the day's scar as it flashes  
 And the lions of the sunset die  
 Among the wires of the sky,  
 Let me leave, now, these cold lines  
 Which your Father also signs.

# SORROW DAM AND MR. MILLBANK

An Idyll

---

EDGAR MITTELHÖLZER

HERE is a road that leads out of the south-eastern end of the town of New Amsterdam towards the Canje Creek, and it is one of the dreariest roads in British Guiana. The first stretch of it is known to the townspeople as Sorrow Dam. On either hand the terrain is flat and swampy, with a profusion of wild vegetation, mostly *courida* and black-sage shrubs. In the rain season it is nothing unusual to see the snout of an alligator protruding out of the swamp, only a few yards from the grass parapet that borders the road. It is a road built up of burnt earth, and is often full of ruts which become muddy pools in the wet season. Further east—that is to say beyond Sorrow Dam—a few isolated dwellings begin to appear, trash-roofed huts, mud-houses and very tiny shingled cottages, all occupied by poor peasants, people who depend upon their provision-patches and one or two cows and sheep for a livelihood.

It was along this road every evening, around five, that Mr. Millbank came for a walk—his ‘daily constitutional’, his fellow townsmen called it, though he himself did not like the description; he hated trite, conventional tags, and, besides, he did not consider his walk beneficial only from a point of physical health; he looked upon it really as a means of escaping from the dull urbanity of the town. To him, there was nothing dreary about this road with its red, uneven surface and the bush and swamps through which it runs. The smutty tales people told of it as a popular trysting place at night and of the motor excavators that dumped their sewage—their ‘sorrows’—in ‘graves’ on the southern side of the road had no effect on Mr. Millbank for whom this road had become a place where he could be at peace with himself, where he could forget

the ledgers and journals in the office where he worked and be his natural self. And his natural self was a very simple, retiring and contented self.

He was forty-three, a bachelor with hardly any friends, and had no ambitions to be anything but what he was—the third accountant in the large office in the Strand where he had started out as a ledger clerk and been promoted automatically during the past twenty-four years. Besides this walk every evening, his recreations were reading and listening in on the radio. An elderly uncle and aunt in Georgetown and a cousin in Barbados were the only relatives he possessed, and these might just as well not have existed, for he neither visited them nor corresponded with them. For the past fifteen years he had lived as a lodger and boarder in the home of a well-known family. His room was next to the dining-room—the only bedroom on the first storey—and the family treated him with an indulgent fondness as though he were a very well-behaved pet dog. Old Milly, they called him.

They were fond of him at the office, too, and often teased him about his bachelor state and about his evening walks—and his deep religiousness. For it must be explained that Sunday was the only day on which Mr. Millbank did not go for a walk. He was an active member of the Church of England, and not only attended morning mass and evensong but was also a Sunday-school teacher and turned out every Sunday afternoon at three to take his class.

He had a sense of humour, and did not mind the teasing of his colleagues—even when they teased him about his churchiness; sometimes he would agree that going to church did not necessarily make people good, and he never took up a self-righteous attitude. Indeed, it was his sense of humour that saved him from much more ragging.

To the peasants along the road where he walked he was as familiar a figure as though he were part of the landscape. Some of them even looked out for his tallish, slim figure clad in shorts and shirt of khaki drill and black stockings. They always had a smile and a word for him—and sometimes he stopped to talk to them, asking them about their families and their work: how the cows and sheep were getting on, how was the

weather affecting the crops, had young Balgobin got over his malaria?

It was not unusual for him to take home a parcel of mangoes or jamoons or sapodillas, a gift from Ramjohn or Benji or Mary, and the Lamports—that was the name of the family who boarded him—would rag him about it.

‘We’re going to have to watch Mr. Milly. I believe he has a girl friend on Sorrow Dam.’ Or—‘Mr. Milly, when is the wedding coming off? She must be a rich widow with a lot of land if she can give you all these fruits?’

To which Mr. Millbank might reply with a smile and a blush: ‘I’m keeping it a secret for the present. I’ll let you know all about it in good time.’

Rain did not prevent him from taking his walks. Indeed, he preferred rainy evenings. In his mackintosh and rubber overshoes and old sun-helmet, he stood by the grass parapet one evening and told Ramjohn: ‘I like walking through rain like this—and yet it saddens me, because I always think of you poor people and what you have to go through when the swamps overflow and come right up to your doors. What about your *yam beds*? You think this weather will trouble them?’

‘Ah don’ t’ink it, chief,’ said Ramjohn, passing a hand over his hair which the heavy drizzle had pasted flat over his skull. ‘De drains Ah dig round dem working good. De water running off quick.’

‘Oh, fine! The drains are a success, eh? Last rain season they let you down, remember?’ Mr. Millbank’s gaze moved across the swollen trench to the distant provision-patches beyond Ramjohn’s trash-roofed hut, and there was a yearning light in his eyes, as though were it not that it would mean wading through ankle-deep, or even knee-deep, water he would have gone with Ramjohn to inspect the *yam beds*. Last Christmas he had made Ramjohn a gift of a shovel and a rake.

A half a mile further along, he stopped to smile at Benji who had just driven in the cows for the night. ‘It’s a wonder they didn’t get drowned,’ he said to Benji, after he had listened to Benji’s tale of hardships on the flooded pastureland.

Benji, dripping wet, his black face shiny and cheerful despite

his troubles, laughed. 'Sah, de way you say dat it almost mek me feel you woulda like to come and help me fetch dem in from de pasture.'

Mr. Millbank gave him a quick look, then as though catching himself, smiled and said: 'Yes. Yes, Benji, sometimes I do feel I'd like to.'

When he moved on eventually, his face took on a thoughtful look, and now and then he smiled secretly to himself as he gazed around at the wild, drab scene overburdened with wetness. The rain hissed around him, steadily and with an insistence that made it seem as if it would go on for weeks and months without cessation. Water hurried along in the trenches with a bubble and gurgle and kept the weeds that grew in them at a perpetual slant and in a perpetual waving animation. The huts and mud-houses and the tiny cottages stood each on their spacious patch of land looking drenched and lonely but somehow suggestive of warmth and cosiness within. Whenever Mr. Millbank's gaze rested on one of them his eyes would narrow wistfully and he would shake his head slightly.

On his way back—he never went further than the Water Works—he saw two of Mary's four children wading in a pond which the rain had made before their shapeless mud-walled home. One wore a dirty, ragged shirt, one nothing at all, but they were both shrieking and happy, splashing water on each other, churning the pool into a muddy slush. Mr. Millbank shouted and waved, and their activities ceased as suddenly as if someone had pressed a button. They stared and grinned sheepishly and called: 'Howdy, sah!'

Their mother heard the voices and appeared at the door, drawing aside the rice-bag which served as curtain. Her broad black face turned broader in a smile as she waved and called: 'Howdy, Mr. Millbank! Ow, sah! In all dis rain! Tek care you ketch cold!'

'No chance of it, Mary! I'm too accustomed to the rain now!'

In his voice were mingled both bravado and cameraderie—and slight regret; it was as if he felt guilty because he knew that in half an hour he would be safe and dry reading a book by electric light in his room while she here would still be close

#### SORROW DAM AND MR. MILLBANK

to the damp earth and the wild, rank vegetation, struggling to prevent rain-laden gusts of wind from putting out her kerosene lamp, listening to the gurgle of water and wondering when it would invade her home.

'See and get home safe, sah!' she called.

'I will, Mary! I will! How is the new lamb?'

'It gettig on good! If de wedder fair tomorrow when you pass you can come in and Ah will show you it!'

It might 'well have been this evening that proved the deciding spark that brought into flame Mr. Millbank's long-smouldering yearnings. It might have been. No one can be sure. But during the next few months he became a very active man; so much so that he was the subject of much speculative gossip and the object of renewed and persistent ragging.

'I hear you're spending your evenings in some queer places, Mr. Milly,' Mrs. Lampert teased. 'And keeping funny company. I always said Sorrow Dam would spoil you.'

'Sometimes it's good to be spoilt,' smiled Mr. Milbank—but in his manner there was a vague weariness. Had the Lamperts been more perceptive they would have realized that he was only being good-humouredly polite, that their ragging and their unoriginal banter had long ago ceased to amuse him.

At the office it was the same.

'I hear a rumour that you're spending all your savings on a widow, Mr. Milly. Is it true?'

'Yes,' nodded Mr. Millbank, switching on his sense of humour as usual, though nobody seemed to detect that he did so with a sighing effort. 'She lives in a cottage a little past Sorrow Dam.'

Only the peasants beyond Sorrow Dam did not have to wonder and speculate about Mr. Millbank's activities.

Ramjohn said one evening: 'Your friends going t'ink it very funny, chief. They going say you gone mad. But I understand how you feel.'

Mary told him: 'Don't mind what people talk, Mr. Millbank. Dem townpeople ain' know what living is yet. From what Ah see of you all dese evenings since you passing here Ah know is a good step you teking.'

EDGAR MITTELHÖLZER

Benji, too, was certain that it was a sound move. 'Ah don't t'ink you will regret it, sah. It's a few years very well since you been taking walk on dis road. You must know you' mind by now.'

Several others said they thought he was doing right, and wished him well.

When, at last, he handed in his resignation at the office and told the Lamports that he was leaving them it was just as the peasants had predicted. Everybody said he was mad—and they said it as though they meant it. This time there was no ragging. No conventional jokes.

'But why,' they wanted to know, '*why* did you have to spend your money buying land and building a cottage in that awful part of the country?'

'How,' they demanded, '*how* could you possibly exist farming and keeping cows? Do you know what a hard life it is?'

And now Mr. Millbank did not have to be careful about hiding the weariness. He sighed and told them: 'Yes, I do know what a hard life it is, that's why I'm going away from you all to live such a life. And believe me, I am going to live.'

And Mr. Millbank, despite all that was said, despite all that everyone did to dissuade him, went and lived in the little cottage he had built. And he still lives there and works hard and wades barefooted through the rain to bring in his cows. Like any of the peasants. Himself a peasant. The silly madman!

# LES FRÈRES ZEMGANNO

(*Edmond de Goncourt and the Circus*)

---

THOMAS WALTON

‘DARING young men on the flying trapeze’ is not, at first sight, a particularly apt description of the two Goncourt brothers, Edmond with his chronic dysentery and Jules with his gastritis and incipient madness. Yet that is how Edmond symbolized their activities and relationships when, in 1879, eight years after his younger brother’s death, he wrote *Les Frères Zemganno*, his novel of the circus—and justified his symbolism.

For twenty years they had collaborated, first in studies of social history, later in novels which are beautifully written clinical histories of social neuroses and, as a background to all their activities, they had kept their detailed, intimate Journal, the clinical history of their own convoluted relationship. It was only natural, then, that in presenting the first novel he had written without his brother’s collaboration, Edmond de Goncourt should first of all survey their achievement. This he does in the short and somehow pathetic preface to *Les Frères Zemganno*. Taking stock of contemporary literature from the appearance of their own *Germinie Lacerteux* to Émile Zola’s *L’Assommoir*, he asserts, fully aware of the difficulty of the task, that the methods of the Naturalist school will never be fully justified until someone has written *le roman réaliste de l’élégance*. One visit is enough, he says, for an author to take in the essentials of a working-class dwelling, but to discover the soul of a Parisian drawing-room, he adds, with a conviction born of long experience, ‘one needs to wear out the silk of its arm-chairs and extract full confession from its gilt or rosewood furniture.’ The task had been enormous even when he was working with his brother. After Jules’s death, Edmond admits, his own courage faltered for a time and then he set to work again, alone. The outcome—to look ahead—was *Chérie*, a

treasure house of feminine frippery and an account of the emotional refinements of the Parisienne of the eighties, but still not the perfect novel of *le grand monde*, *le monde quintessencie* that Goncourt hoped to achieve. For that, the world had to wait for Marcel Proust.

*Les Frères Zemganno* seems to mark a' halt in Goncourt's literary crusade, a moment of peaceful recollection from which all the harshness of Realism and Naturalism—*la vérité trop vraie*—is banished and in which, all the anguish of authorship forgotten, the lonely Edmond de Goncourt looks around, surveys the past, looks towards the future, and gives himself the courage to face it by clarifying his emotions in what he describes as 'an essay in poetic reality'. The essay in question is *Les Frères Zemganno*.

In it, like the clown in one of Théodore de Banville's *Odes Funambulesques*, Edmond de Goncourt leaps on to the spring-board and, leaving far behind the world of 'clinical portraits', the neurotic world of *Germinie Lacerteux*, *Renée Maupérin*, and *Manette Salomon*, is shot up into a world of clean, simple living and physical perfection. There is a pleasing pastoral quality about the opening sequences—they can hardly be called chapters—of *Les Frères Zemganno*, with their account of the life of the travelling circus troupe—old Bescapé, his beautiful young gipsy wife and their two sons Gianni and Nello, the melancholy strong man and the malicious clown Agapit Cochevru, the miserable trombone player and his mentally deficient dog Lariflette, the wire-dancer La Talochée, so called because of the beatings she had received as a child. A pathetic collection, yet Edmond de Goncourt seems to have found a warm place in his heart for each of them—even the unattractive Cochevru—and to have taken quiet pleasure in recounting their simple gipsy existence, including even the legendary hedgehog cooked in clay in an open fire. He certainly took delight in describing the performances they gave in their circus booth, from the preliminary announcement on an amazingly worded playbill to the hilarious Italian pantomime, 'performed by the entire troupe,' which brought them to a close. He lingers tenderly over young Nello's initiation into the science of acrobatics and the art of clowning, and

follows the troupe throughout the length and breadth of France, enjoying every new landscape, drinking in nature, as he says, 'through every pore.'

In this melting, but never maudlin mood, Goncourt's style softens too, and although it is still possible to pick out examples of the notorious *écriture artiste* so painstakingly developed by him and his brother, it is pleasant to relax with him after the striking, but over self-conscious landscape painting of *Germinie* and *Manetté*. It leaves one with the feeling that, for a Goncourt, *Les Frères Zemganno* was written with relative ease and that once he had mastered his background Edmond let himself give way completely to what he described as 'dreams mingled with memories'.

For that reason *Les Frères Zemganno* is the quintessence of the Goncourt's aesthetic and may serve as a key to the rest of their work. Everything is there; their attitude to art and life and humanity is fully illustrated, for although Edmond was now writing alone, he knew that there was not a single expression of emotion or opinion in the book to which his brother would not have subscribed. He would have admired the beauty of the Turkey carpets old Bescapé used to buy; he would have devoured the sixteenth-century treatise on saltation and voltige which Gianni picked up at a second-hand bookstall, and shaken his head, like Edmond, over the lacerated armorial binding, the illustrations in which a modern child had pencilled pipes in the mouths of all the acrobats. He might have recoiled in horror from that magnificent eccentric La Tompkins—American millionairess turned circus-rider—the *femme fatale*, the energetic villainess of the book, but he would certainly have admired the superb egoism which made her go in secret to feast her eyes on her two favourite horses, Erebus and Snow, by the fantastic light of Bengal flares, in an atmosphere perfumed by scented fountains. Like her, he would have been thrilled by the 'solitary, secret possession of beautiful unique things unknown to the rest of the world'. But her desire to possess the handsome Nello, though he might have understood it, he would, like Edmond, have regarded with the gravest suspicion as a serious menace to the artistic integrity of the Zemganno team.

Woman, in the Goncourt's scheme of things, was meant to be nothing more than *le premier des objets d'art*. Woman, and particularly a woman with intellectual pretensions, they regarded as the natural enemy of a man with æsthetic ideals. Had they not written *Manette Salomon* to show how a woman can destroy an artist's creative powers? Was not Woman's relation to the Artist one of the favourite subjects of the entire Naturalist school? Their friend Alphonse Daudet and their disciples Huysmans and Zola all struggled with the problem, its pros and cons, in theory and in practice. 'The man who goes in for literary creation,' Edmond de Goncourt wrote in his Journal, 'has no need of affection, wife, or children; his heart no longer exists; he is nothing but a brain.' And, in their days of collaboration, the two Goncourt brains had pulsated in the subtlest of harmonies, each analysing the other and responding accordingly in what has been described as their *hermaphrodisme intellectuel*.

This extraordinary mental cohabitation of two ailing writers is transformed in *Les Frères Zemganno* into the harmony of mind and muscle which unites the two handsome, healthy acrobat-musicians. Indeed the whole problem of artistic creation as envisaged by the Goncourts is here presented in terms of physical action—the timing of a somersault, the bodily sufferings of the acrobat working on a new act. The author's aspirations to the higher flights of imagination are transposed into the acrobat's attempts to make a fourteen-foot vertical jump from a springboard. The evil influence of woman in an artist's life is symbolized in the way the frustrated Tompkins causes the Zemgannos' apparatus to be tampered with, ruining their daring new feat and crippling the younger brother for life. Even this physical injury which incapacitates Nello as an acrobat had its equivalent in the life of the author. His literary collaboration had been interrupted by Jules's mental derangement and he had watched it with the same growing dismay as Gianni realizing that the days of the Zemganno team are ended.

Handled by anyone but a Goncourt, such a piece of symbolism might have been simply absurd. The Zemgannos might have been merely a pair of dream acrobats, their circus

background nothing but spangles and sawdust. True, there is a glamour about circus life which lends itself to fantasy, but there is also a real, a technical side which could not fail to appeal to a scrupulous workman like Edmond de Goncourt.

There is little in the famous *Journal*, as now published, to show how Goncourt acquired his information about, and his insight into the life of circus artistes, but some of his biographers have told of his interest in the circus and the music-hall, and in a note at the end of the preface to his novel, he expresses his thanks to Victor Franconi, a member of the well-known circus family, to Léon Sari, director of the *Folies Bergère* and to those breath-taking acrobats from England the Hanlon-Lees. It would appear then, that he had the opportunity to study his artistes at first hand, in the ring, in their dressing-rooms and homes and in their favourite cafés. He noted their personal habits and their professional language. He knew their ambitions and the cost at which they achieved them. He could appreciate the tremendous risks, the genuine physical skill, the mental alertness that goes into circus work of all kinds, and the complete reality of it all as opposed, for example, to the make-believe of the theatre. That he should take counsel of the Hanlon-Lees was almost inevitable, for their violent, though exquisite clowning was admired not only by the general public, but by most of France's leading literary figures from Théodore de Banville to Zola and Huysmans. They were the Marx Brothers of Naturalism. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Edmond de Goncourt sending his acrobat brothers to England as part of their apprenticeship, to learn the kind of clowning he could not help but admire and, from it, to develop their own original form of acrobatic humour—gentler and, to use a typical Goncourtism, less 'cemeteryious' in spirit than the shattering violence of the English artistes. If, however, Edmond de Goncourt modelled his Zemganno Brothers on any particular pair of circus artistes, it was probably on the Price Brothers, the equilibrists, who used to wear deep blue tights embroidered with flowers and butterflies and punctuate their feats on their swinging ladders with duets on flute and violin. But it might easily have been the Hanlons who told him about life in the English

music-hall, about Springthorp's in Hull, where the Zemgannos made their English *début*, about the London agents Charles Roberts and Ambrose Maynard, and about Newsome the circus-owner. They might have told him, too, of the existence of that amazing training-ground for acrobats, the 'ruins' in Victoria Street, and given him a surprising mass of details about salaries and 'benefits' and business arrangements generally. For the Hanlons had been in show business since childhood. They had made their London *début* in 1846. Any information they provided would be genuine, drawn straight from their own experience, and consequently the very kind of personal document to delight a Goncourt.

There is, however, one source of Edmond de Goncourt's knowledge of circus life in England which, up to now, has been completely ignored. It is an English book, Thomas Frost's *Circus Life and Circus Celebrities*, published in 1875, that is four years before *Les Frères Zemganno*, and still accepted as an authoritative work. Four chapters of Frost's book (xiv, xv, xvi, and xviii), the first three devoted to the 'Reminiscences of a Gymnast' related 'as nearly as may be possible in his own words', and the last to the language, dress, and private life of circus folk, contain not only the majority of the facts used by Goncourt in his account of his heroes' life in England, but even a firm word-canvas over which he either embroidered his own peculiar style or simply translated straight into French. Only a detailed comparison of the French and English texts will show just how deeply Edmond de Goncourt is indebted to Thomas Frost's anonymous Gymnast. That must be left to the individual reader. But here are two characteristic examples of Goncourt embroidery.

The Gymnast's description of Roberts as 'a nice sort of fellow, a smart, dark-complexioned man with gold rings in his ears', becomes Goncourt's 'un petit homme, à la peau de figure tannée, rhinocérisée, et portant des anneaux d'or aux oreilles'.

Here now is the Gymnast's account of the activites in the 'ruins' in Victoria Street:

'I... remembered,' says Frost, 'that it conveyed the idea that a Metropolitan Improvement Commission's notion of

some street improvements consisted in demolishing some three or four hundred houses, and creating a wilderness of unfinished houses, yawning chasms, and heaps of rubbish. The place remained in that condition for several years, and was the rendezvous and free gymnasium of most of the gymnasts, acrobats, rope-dancers, and other professors of muscular sensationalism in the metropolis. 'Well,'—at this point the Gymnast takes up the story—'we fixed our fakements up in the "ruins"; and when the evenings began to get dark we had candles. A lot of us used to be there—Frank Berrington, and Costello, and Jemmy Lee and Joe Welsh, and Bill George, and ever so many more.'

And here is the remarkably personal landscape Edmond de Goncourt designed from it:

'L'année de l'arrivée à Londres des deux frères, il existait dans Victoria Street un endroit nommé *les Ruines*. C'était un immense terrain, où la commission des AMÉLIORATIONS MÉTROPOLITAINES avait fait démolir trois ou quatre cents maisons, un espace désert tout parsemé d'écroulements, avec dans le ciel des vieux murs encore debout à côté d'assises de maisons neuves dont la bâtisse était arrêtée, une terre d'ordures et de décombres, un coin de capitale abandonnée, où une herbe malheureuse commençait à se lever d'un sol de plâtre, d'écaillles d'huîtres, de tessons de bouteilles: un Clos Saint-Lazare enfin. Les Ruines, depuis plusieurs années, étaient le rendezvous, le gymnase en plein air de tous les acrobates, gymnastes, *trapézistes* du trapèze volant ou du trapèze fixe, clowns, jongleurs, danseurs de cordes, équilibristes sans emploi, de tous les gens nés dans la *sciure de bois* ou désireux d'y vivre: l'école en un mot d'où sortirent depuis Frank Berington, Costello, Jemmy Lee, Bill Georges, Joé Welsh, Alhambra Joé. Le soir surtout les Ruines présentaient un curieux spectacle. Dans l'obscurité du champ de démolitions, entre ses pans de murailles noircis aux silhouettes un peu effrayantes, à travers le vol tournoyant de petits fragments pourris de papiers de tenture détachés par le vent, au milieu de la fuite de troupeaux de rats effarés, et aussi loin que se prolongeait l'étendue ténèbreuse et brouillardeuse, la lumière de quatre bouts de chandelles fichées en terre montrait vaguement, ça et là, au-dessus du tremblotement

d'une pâle lueur, des ombres de corps de promenant ou voltigeant dans la nuit du ciel.'

In this, even the expression 'born in the sawdust' and the nickname Alhambra Joe come straight from Thomas Frost, while other passages, particularly the ; description of the artistes' portraits hanging on the walls of Roberts's office, are an amazing mosaic devised of facts and expressions from the same source.

It is not impossible that the close resemblance, amounting in some places to plagiarism, between certain passages of both works, was noticed when *Les Frères Zemganno* came to be translated into English and, in order to avoid complications, the passages were suppressed by the publisher. Whatever the reason, they certainly do not appear in the only English translation of 'this unique circus story' published by John Maxwell in 1886, while Messrs. Roberts and Maynard are therein reduced to the anonymity of 'Mr. Dash' and 'Mr. Blank'. And yet, according to one biographer, after the publication of the English translation, one English circus-owner, amazed at Edmond de Goncourt's understanding of circus folk, offered him a partnership !

A contemporary historian of the circus, Hugues Le Roux, admired the 'superior art and truth' in Goncourt's treatment of circus life, in the way he 'formulated its philosophy, depicted its passions and divined those things that were concealed from him'. And Le Roux's account of the life and training of gymnasts in no way gives the lie to Goncourt's version of their aesthetic and moral code. The most recent writer on the subject, Henri Thétard, in *La Merveilleuse Histoire du Cirque* (Paris, 1947), is, however, more grudging, and says the Zemgannos are too much like saints in a stained-glass window. But even M. Thétard cannot refrain from admiring the poetry of Goncourt's account of life 'on the road'.

It is precisely its gentle poetry, a poetry compounded, according to the author himself, of 'dreams mingled with memories', that makes *Les Frères Zemganno* the most delicate, the most moving of all the Goncourt's novels, and the one which has probably the widest popular appeal, while the hard core of authenticity inside the softer covering of poetry has

#### LES FRÈRES ZEMGANNO

made it, in spite of some critics' reserves, one of the finest circus novels in the world. It is that fusion of imagination and reality that makes it still worthy of the attention of historians and that keeps the memory of Nello and Gianni still alive in the circus of to-day, where one of the most daring and graceful teams in the ring does not disdain to call itself *Les Zemganno* and to perform its thrilling trapeze act, as they did, in a darkened arena. What greater compliment could a Goncourt hope to receive?

#### ERRATUM

It is regretted that the wrong title was given to the fourth volume of Sean O'Casey's autobiography, reviewed on page 92 of the April issue. This should have been INISHFALLEN FARE THEE WELL. Apologies are herewith tendered to the publishers, Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd.

## THE THEATRE

---

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING. <sup>1</sup>WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. Produced by John Gielgud. <sup>1</sup>Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon.

KISS ME, KATE. COLE PORTER. Produced by John Wilson. New Century Theatre, New York.

DAPHNE LAUREOLA. JAMES BRIDIE. Produced by Murray Macdonald. Wyndham's Theatre, London.

THE old, drab, arty patchwork had gone: in its place was a curtain of glowing red velvet, alive with light. That augured well: the auditorium already seemed fresher, the stage nearer. Directly the new curtain rose, I was aware that I was attending a production of style and assurance. There are a thousand felicities of both design and direction in this revival of one of Shakespeare's great but most difficult of comedies to stage and all are legitimate. Here is no invention for its own sake, no irrelevant exhibitionism of 'cleverness' disguising boredom with plot or misapprehension of character. All as it should be—if not unfailingly in the realm of pure inspiration, yet firmly on the plane of authoritative knowledge enforced with true imagination. This is a production which brings forth, in the correct meaning of 'to produce', the cast in a play for the smooth performing of which the artist has devised delightful and practical sets. It is a long time since I have been so ravished by any décor as I was by that which Mariano Andreu has given this *Much Ado*. They are simple, but splendid. They please the eye in themselves, whilst never deflecting attention from the actors and they contribute unobtrusively to the swift playing of scenes upon which the successful alternations in this comedy of moods so greatly depends if it is not to seem one of merely ill-manners.

Against, or amidst, the décor Mr. Gielgud has so marshalled his players and so lovingly handled the text that this revival is as sparkling and fresh as the spring-air we left outside on entering the theatre. We sit, not back but happily up, in our seats, trusting players, producer, and artist completely,

knowing that though there may be faults—it is not in mankind to be perfect—they will not be, for once, faults of ignorance or self-assertion. Ours is an age wary of passion, but I still think it a mistake—in the audience—for the line 'Kill Claudio!' to raise a laugh and in Act V, Scene 1, Leon Quartermaine was so moving that I felt many in the audience forgot Leonato had been privy to the pretence that his daughter had died, and not victim of it. Hero is bound to be a weak spot in the play, but Mr. Gielgud did much by making her and, more markedly Claudio, adolescent in a world of adults and, therefore, less used to love and more and as able to fall out of it as violently as they fell in. Hero and Claudio are, after all, as Shakespeare so delighted to have in his plays, duplicates in reverse of the main characters, here Beatrice and Benedict. Their unfledged love turns easily to suspicion, slander, and hate, whilst the middle-aged pair have learnt how to convert antagonism and jealousy into raillery so fluid that love can flow through. The two couples represent, it has always seemed to me, two stages in the process of love. Seen thus, the scenes in the church and at the tomb, which become symbols, dream-images, are no difficulties and it would appear that Mr. Gielgud so saw them. Certainly he has dissolved the 'difficulties' of the marriage and mourning by approaching them directly and by giving Beatrice, as she should have, full rein in her tirade (so roundly given by Diana Wynyard) of 'O, that I were a man!' as to make us forget the more conventional troubles of Hero before this immediately succeeding outburst of burning passion.

The youth of Claudio makes Don Pedro something in the nature of guardian and this in turn makes the parts both play in the wooing of Hero. Harry Andrews is a first-rate Don Pedro and since I have begun mentioning names, I must add Anthony Quayle as a perfectly self-assured but pleasantly far from ranting Benedict; a quieter performance than some other of his would have led me to think he was ready to give, and agreeably good-humoured, warm-hearted. Neither he nor Diana Wynyard aspire to quite the highest level of comedy. That is a good thing, since it appears to be within the reach of only Dame Edith Evans; but they are on the next, and tread

#### THE THEATRE

it with aplomb and ease. The speaking of all the minor parts was good, particularly John Slater's as Borachio and Penelope Munday's in Margaret's difficult 'You may think perchance that I think you are in love'. Nowhere was Mr. Gielgud more satisfying than in his handling of Dogberry and Verges who instead of being musty and camphor-ridden clowns brought out for an airing, emerged as human beings in something of the loving humour with which they were created. It was, further, typical of the producer's technical brilliance that he recognized the scene in which they apprehend Borachio and Conrade as the crux of the action, and so gave it the whole of the stage in one of Senor Andreu's most beautiful sets.

This production not only sets a new standard for the Shakespeare Festival and its awkward theatre, but is a landmark in modern revivals, and a lesson to producers, designers, and audience alike of what a production should be. It is well worth a journey to Stratford, despite the difficulty so often and so notoriously encountered in obtaining seats.

'The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo' and it is a far cry from poetry to Porter, but I mention *Kiss Me, Kate*, because it is in part concerned with *The Taming of the Shrew*. It is not a musical version of *The Shrew*, and might have been better if it were. The book, by Sam and Bella Spewack, is cast in the familiar American mould of back-stage show-business. A film star (Patricia Morison) divorced from a husband (Alfred Drake) whom she still loves, finds they are playing in the same piece. This is *The Taming of the Shrew* and the humour arises from the casting of the lady as Katherine whilst her husband, as Petruchio is making eyes at Bianca (Lisa Kirk), already in love with Lucentio (Harold Lang). These two allow for the introduction of a soubrette and a 'hoof'er' and the need for dressers permitted Annabelle Hill and Lorenzo Fuller to appear in the menial roles reserved for Negroes.

Some of *The Shrew* is played straight, but at any moment the characters are liable to burst into song, sometimes in character, more often not. Shakespeare's dialogue is thus mixed with Cole Porter's lyrics and the mixture did not seem to me happy. There was one exception in 'I Am Ashamed that

#### THE THEATRE

Women Are So Simple', an inoffensive but not markedly fetching setting of Katherine's last speech in the play. On the other hand, nearly every opportunity offered by the text was disregarded. The possibilities of Kate's music lesson were ignored, as were those of the denied-supper scene. Here she merely sang 'I Hate Men', of which the title may have been in character but the words certainly were not:

*'Of all the types I've ever met within our democracy  
I hate the most the athlete with his manner bold and brassy.  
He may have hair upon his chest, but sister, so has Lassie'*—

jaded, even for musical comedy and less funny than the presumably unintentionally comic lines, italics by me,

*'Gazing down on the Jungfrau  
From our secret châlet for two.'*

Whether behind scenes, in their dressing rooms or whilst acting *The Shrew*, the characters sang exactly the same kind of songs. This need not have been because they were all by Cole Porter because at his best he is sufficiently skilful to have been able to differentiate amusingly between film-star, film-star as Kate and Kate as Kate. But this play does not show him at his best. He seems tired. The lyrics are clever with elaborate rhyme in the manner, now faded, of 'You're the Top'; the wit is elementary, if not primitive. I quote a song, 'Brush Up Your Shakespeare':

*'If your blonde won't respond when you flatter 'er,  
Tell her what Tony told Cleopat-er-er.  
If she fights when her clothes you are mussin'  
Well, then, close Much Ado About Nuthin'—  
Brush up your Shakespeare, and they'll all kow-tow.  
If the wife of the British ambassador  
Try a crack out of Troilus and Cressida,  
If she says she won't buy it or take it,  
Make her take it, what's more, as you like it.  
If she says "your behaviour is heinous",  
Kick her right in the Cori-o-lanus—  
Brush up your Shakespeare and they'll all kow-tow.*

This seems to me a typical but saddening example of the lack

#### THE THEATRE

of wit, or even meaning, in commercialised 'light' entertainment. One does not take a musical comedy to task for not being good Shakespeare, but for being bad Cole Porter. The score has one or two hits, notably 'Why Won't You Behave', but they would not make the name of an unknown composer and the score generally keeps to an even mediocrity, recognizable as Cole Porter's but mainly through echoes. His main interest seems to be a rather belated one in Gilbert and Sullivan; much of his scoring is plain D'Oyley Carte. You need a good deal of patience to enjoy *Kiss Me, Kate*, but you need even more *Gondoliers*.

It is necessary to add that the piece is sung and danced, and the music played, with great verve and precision by all concerned. Its execution is a hundred times more skilled than its conception and one more reason why American musicals should be exported with original Broadway (not touring) cast and production or not at all. I cannot see it sending audiences here into quite the transport of mechanized delight it receives in New York, as we do not start off by finding Elizabethan dress and speech in themselves side-splitting jokes—just as *Brigadoon* missed the advantage it had in New York, of Scotland being as exotic there as the South Seas to us here.

Anything Scottish is, of course, by us, or at least by those frightened filibusterers in our midst, the critics, held to be sacred. Vienna or Spain may be travestied, but Scotland must somehow escape, and *Brigadoon* be rebuked for not stepping outside the convention which in *Belinda Fair* may be praised. Similarly, by virtue of the fear his race inspires, Mr. James Bridie must be taken more seriously than the merit of his work would suggest. His latest piece, *Daphne Laureola*, has been treated with a respect which, in a better-ordered country, would be given to the work, however crude, of a promising poet with something to say. Mr. Bridie occasionally touches the poetic, and he has always plenty to say—most of which has been said before. He is a trickster, palming off clichés as new-minted truths, divagations as voyages of discovery, situations as scenes and a series of these as drama, though they more nearly make music-hall without music—save that no

#### THE THEATRE

'turn' dare be incomplete in itself. He arouses our curiosity by his daring, our anger by his cowardice and, like a true huckster, when challenged to prove the authenticity of his wares, disappears in the crowd—a crowd of echoes conjured out of Barrie, O'Casey and Shaw. He has an adult vocabulary in which very little that is adult is said most engagingly and when we are, even so, nearly tired of listening he will say, rawly, something or things which we had almost despaired of hearing on the modern English stage.

All this happens in *Daphne Laureola* and it happens so brilliantly as to dazzle us because Dame Edith Evans is there to take the threadbare cloak the dramatist has given her and transform it into a shimmering ball-gown in which she expresses her own view of Woman. The character created for her to do this is of a dipsomaniac wife of a titled millionaire her senior by some years. Before the play begins she has been the daughter of a clergyman, a Newnham scholar, widow of a school-master killed climbing and accountant to a Birmingham biscuit factory. I give these clues for what guide they may be to her behaviour in the first act, where she sits in a Soho restaurant, drinking brandy (rather, I thought, as if she did not appreciate it) until she bursts into song, tells the story of her childhood and invites them all to tea at her Hampstead home. The second act shows her as tender wife to invalid husband, both congratulating themselves that no friends are due to disturb them and she quite forgetting who her guests are or why they arrive. One is a romantic young Pole, fascinated by the broken brilliance of this eccentric Englishwoman, but gently deterred, in a speech that boils down to nothing by the husband (Felix Aylmer), who as gently dies. In the last act, his widow, now married to the chauffeur-butler who was also her keeper, reappears in the restaurant where it so happens the same company have once more reassembled. The Pole once more fights, the lady once more declaims and we go home once more hoodwinked, for at least a day, that we have seen something more than an Aunt Sally Mr. Bridie has erected, not to knock down, but to challenge us to admire for his audacity at having left standing.

The honours in this achievement—for it is one—go unreservedly to Dame Edith Evans. She has always gone straight for the heart of any character she has been called upon to play, showing not only what that character was but also what she dared not admit she was. Sometimes this has resulted in her playing a part for more than it was worth. Sometimes, when the part and the actress were equal but not sympathetic, the consequent coming-to-grips was somewhat over-evident. Now, at the height of her powers, joyous as ever to hear and in her silences rewarding to watch, Dame Edith uses the façade of this broken pathetic creature as if she sees her an emblem of civilization through whose cracks she herself, with ease and authority, can reveal the reality beneath, the Daphne within the laurel. Mr. Bridie's play may not be much above *Kiss Me, Kate*, but Dame Edith's performance is Shakespearean and that does not wreck the play, for there is no play to wreck.

ROBERT HERRING.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

---

MEREDITH. SIEGFRIED SASOON. Constable. 15s.

A REPRODUCTION of Sargent's portrait of the romantically handsome author faces a title-page of unusual grace (on which the publishers should be complimented) and one's heart gives a leap. Then—oh! oh! oh! what a dismal first chapter! A chapter to deaden the stimulated inquirer and to drive away from Meredith the potential young readers. Sasoon's book is intended to and could enchant. The book should be dipped into backwards, beginning with the fine concluding paragraphs, 'As a delineator of womanhood he stands alone in modern literature . . . he has given us a heightened consciousness of Nature . . . his association (is) with movement . . . He is the poet of Nature in action and the joy of earth.' I hope young readers will stride past the pedestrian chronology of the earlier pages and settle into the main part of the book where Mr. Sasoon presents vividly and analyses illuminatingly the life and the works of George Meredith, O.M.

This review is an act of homage to Meredith. When I was a schoolgirl of sixteen my school friend lent me *Diana of the Crossways*. I tracked down every other work of his that could be found. I felt as a young girl what I still feel to-day, that only Meredith and Shakespeare portray real live women. The men of Dickens or Tolstoy may be more alive than Meredith's men, but only he and Shakespeare create women who are one's very own blood-sisters.

Nothing more delightful could happen to youth than that Mr. Sasoon's so well expressed devotion should introduce them to Meredith. He is essentially the novelist of youth: his verbal felicities and difficulties are both the meat of youth: his long, long sentences are best read on a hill-top with a packet of sandwiches. Young love blooms in his vital glowing women, adored by men who see in them that eternal deep emotion which is the fire of life. 'Meredith's people are dated in their ideas and language.' What does that matter? So are Chaucer's people, and so are Heloise and Abelard—so are all the great.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

The great who glow eternally with the emotions of truth and love shining even through their individual temporal raiment.

It is but a year since Sir Osbert Sitwell, in a presidential address, avowed himself an admirer of *Meredith* and, writing 'to save him from another', prophesied that 'before long we shall be given more than one life of *Meredith*'. Within the year comes Sassoon's *Meredith*.

Sassoon's book illuminates the novels and the poetry more than *Meredith's* personal life. His presentation and analysis of the poem 'Love in a Valley' should compel his readers to turn to *Meredith's* finest poetry. His other great poem, 'Modern Love,' was admired by Robert Browning and T. H. Huxley and Rossetti, and Mr. Sassoon perceives and conveys to his readers *Meredith's* consummate technical skill, as well as his deep and subtle feeling in this poem.

That the novels are not only stories of human life but of felt and incorporated *place* is well brought out by Sassoon. So vivid are *Meredith's* portrayals of the consciousness of place that districts are recognizable as his. I had a vivid experience of this. When first married, my husband bought the estate of Givons Grove, and one day when in the grounds alone I felt *Meredith* beside me (though I had never met him in life). The feeling of his presence was so intense and clear that I spoke of it and we then found out that *Meredith* had in life often been there. We had bought the house his daughter had married into, only two miles from his own Flint Cottage, at the foot of Box Hill.

Sassoon's book is wisely rich in extracts from *Meredith's* own writings. It disappoints serious readers, however, by giving no precise references to any of his quotations or authorities. Sometimes Mr. Sassoon slips from his own richly wrought style into almost jocular journalism, and now and then blemishes such as 'twenty years older than her'. In spite of this the book is so good that it is to be hoped that a second edition will be needed when its minor blemishes can be cleared away. It honours not unworthily the poet whom I hold to be England's greatest novelist.

MARIE C. STOPES

## ENGLISH EMBLEM BOOKS. ROSEMARY FREEMAN. Chatto and Windus. 21s.

PROFESSOR MARIO PRAZ first introduced us to the delight and profit hidden in those forbidding curiosities, the emblem books of the seventeenth century. Miss Freeman's is the first full-length study of the purely English emblem books and, one would say, the definitive one.

The emblem was one manifestation of the seventeenth century taste for allegory, a taste inherited from the Middle Ages. It flourished at the same time as the metaphysical conceit, having similar origins. Every image was a potential emblem; and the emblem may be regarded as a cherishing of the image beyond the bounds of literature by externalization and visualization. Furthermore, the emblem combined two powerful tendencies of the seventeenth century, the sensuous and the didactic. Bacon was the first to point this out: 'Emblems reduce intellectual conceptions to sensible images, and that which is sensible more forcibly strikes the memory and is more easily imprinted on it than that which is intellectual.'

Most of the emblem books are, it must be admitted, dull and uninviting to modern eyes, though some of them do have intrinsic merits, as Miss Freeman points out, and Quarles at least has never entirely lost favour. But the emblem books have another value to readers of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature. As an influence the emblem came into literature in two ways—as rhetoric and as decoration, that is as a source of verbal wit and as a source of imagery. Few writers of the time were unaffected by this widespread phenomenon, but the three who show the greatest emblematic influence are Spenser, George Herbert, and Bunyan.

Miss Freeman preserves a nice balance between the exposition and illustration of the emblem books themselves, and the elucidation of their influence on contemporary literature, and particularly on these three writers. One's only quarrel with her patient and lucid study is that she ignores the reciprocal nature of the influence. The emblem arose out of the taste for metaphor and conceit, not vice versa; and while it is true that Spenser, Herbert, and Bunyan, and also Chapman, Shakespeare, Webster, and others, reveal definite emblematic influences, it

#### REVIEWS OF BOOKS

was, generally speaking, the emblem books which were derivative, and not the literature of the time.

As Dr. Tillyard points out in his Foreword, 'The English habit of mind between 1560 and 1660 is more remote from our own than we are usually prepared to admit.' The growth of science and modern habits of thought killed the taste for allegory and metaphor, so that by 1666 Samuel Parker could write thus: 'to discourse of the Natures of Things in Metaphor and Allegory is nothing else but to sport or trifle with empty words, because those Schemes do not express the Natures of Things but only their Similitudes and Resemblances.' With this new attitude the emblem, like its more purely literary counterpart the metaphysical conceit, passed out of fashion, and no resuscitation of it is imaginable. Miss Freeman has performed a service to literary history and to criticism with this study of one aspect of the remoteness of the seventeenth-century mental climate. All students of the period should be grateful to her and to the publishers for an attractively written and produced volume.

T. H. JONES

THE DESCENT OF THE GOD. MAURICE COLLIS. Faber.

12s. 6d.

IN searching for the clue to the essential character of a people the poet, with a lucky or inspired cast, is often more successful than the historian or the anthropologist with their more cumbersome drag-nets of facts and theories. If Mr. Collis had approached the scene of his book with anything but the temper of an artist he would probably never have had the experience around which the book is built; and which—one suspects—has given him a better understanding of the people of Burma than many a hum-drum year spent among them as administrator.

In 1921, while he was inspecting the island of Manaung (Cheduba) off the Burmese coast, some of the local Headmen told Mr. Collis that they would like to take him to a red hill where lived a spirit. He consented to go, and had one of those unaccountable experiences that apparently are not rare in the East. The hill was perfumed: as soon as he put his foot on its

lower slope he was 'enveloped in a scent, a scent as of flowers'. But there was nothing on the hill which might conceivably give it a scent; nothing except coarse grass and red soil. He took away some of the grass and soil to be examined by experts, but very soon afterwards all traces of scent had disappeared from his specimens. His inquiries showed that the hill was connected with a dead Queen whose abode the Red Mount had once been. Before leaving the island he made further inquiries into the story of the Mount and its Queen, a historical, sixteenth century figure. *The Descent of the God* is an imaginative reconstruction of the story.

The story is beautifully told and its graceful and lyrical prose make a crystal setting for the myth. The first few chapters describing the journey to the Mount take the reader with them into an atmosphere where the strangest happenings seem credible. The author has made the story follow the island puppet-dramas whose theme was the origin of the cult on the Red Mount; and here, perhaps, is its only weakness: once the origin of the cult has been explained, he ends his story rather abruptly, whereas the reader would have liked to follow the Queen, an interesting and resourceful character, at least up to her death.

The myth itself raises many interesting questions, especially since it corresponds with one of the central happenings in Christianity: the espousal of the Virgin.

One feels that Mr. Collis has succeeded in his aim of giving the story imaginative truth; he admits, however, that he is no nearer discovering the secret of the scent which prompted its telling, and the book ends on a note of challenge:

'But the Mount is still there; and still, I suppose, is steeped as before. It is on the map; anyone can go there, and smell the scent, and draw his conclusions.'

GEORGE EWART EVANS

OUR OLD MAN. MILLIE TOOLE. Dent. 10s. 6d.

THIS is a Lancashire life with Father—except that Father seems hardly ever to have been at home to have any life with. Millie Toole says: 'Our Old Man became public property when I was about ten years old. Even the children with whom

*Three May  
Selections*

**The Bible and Archæology**

This book supplies the Biblical student with a survey of the results of archæological discoveries during the past hundred years so far as they affect the authenticity, interpretation, and text of the Bible. *Fully illustrated with half-tone plates.* 15s. net

*SIR FREDERIC KENYON*

**The Skeptical Gardener**

This new re-set edition on *The Skeptical Gardener*, has been prepared for HARRAP'S COUNTRY-LOVER'S LIBRARY of proven and successful works on the countryside and kindred subjects. No changes have been made in the text and there is *a completely new set of decorations by Astrid Walford.* 10s. 6d. net

*HUMPHREY DENHAM*

**Malta : An Account**

The traditions, customs, language, and many other facets of Maltese life and development are included in this colourful and informative survey which has been prepared by a great and widely read authority on the Mediterranean. It is a rich, diverse narrative, *fully illustrated with plates in half-tone, line drawings, and maps.*

15s. net

*SIR HARRY LUKE*

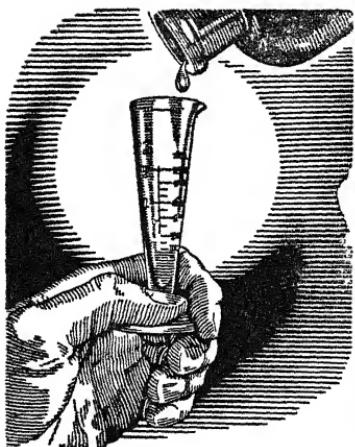
**HARRAP**

we played had views on him which came out when squabbles developed over games. "Go on—your father's never at home," they would say, and although I used to answer that his job took him away from home I knew that there was a little more to it than that.'

Our Old Man was Joe Toole, and his job was selling space for the *Manchester Guardian*. But Joe was Lancashire-Irish, so selling space was only a side-line, for Joe was an ardent member of the Labour Party, and twice he became M.P. for Salford. And in 1936-37 he was Lord Mayor of Manchester—surely the most colourful Lord Mayor of that or any other city. He lived his life at the double. He was a born fighter; he fought from the time he was a ragged boy in the streets of Salford until he was a tile-hatted, frock-coated politician. And he fought always with a twinkle in his eye: a sturdy little bantam, who was downed often, but never for very long.

His longest and bitterest, but certainly (for the reader) his most amusing fight was with Mother. Mother was Maggie Toole, who had been born in Texas, but who came to England when a girl and was wooed by Joe when he 'was runner-up at his school for the title of boy with no seat to his pants and no soles to his shoes.' Maggie Toole was as great a character in her way as Joe was in his, but their ways didn't always run on parallel lines. The story of their married life is brilliantly recorded by their daughter. Millie Toole is to be congratulated upon taking an objective view and writing with the utmost detachment about a relationship which must have been very trying for the family.

What Maggie wanted most from life was to look after her family and to do her endless spring-cleaning, but she took it all in her stride when Our Old Man made her first a M.P.'s wife and then Lady Mayoress of Manchester. She always did her duty—except on one occasion when dining with the King and Queen at Knowsley Hall. Her daughter describes this very amusingly and says it was the one occasion when Maggie knew her duty but did not do it. Perhaps the proudest moment of Maggie's term as Lady Mayoress was when she launched the cruiser *H.M.S. Manchester*. For this service she received a rose bowl and two silver salvers, which she willed to each of

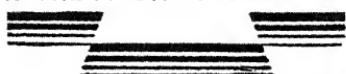


THE pharmacist insists on accuracy. Take a "drop" of liquid, for instance. The gravity-formed "drop" can vary in size, so he uses the "minim" measure shown here. This extreme accuracy is essential when measuring potent fluid medicaments, of which the prescribed dose may be only one or two minims. Long practice and skilled training make the pharmacist a stickler for accuracy—and for quality in the goods that he dispenses and recommends. The pharmacist's advice is always sound.

*Ask his opinion of*

# Euthymol

TOOTH PASTE  
A PARKE-DAVIS PRODUCT.



★ *Rheumatic Sufferer*  
reports **AMAZING**  
**RELIEF**  
*after only ten  
days' treatment  
with Beltona*

"After months of torturing pain, the relief has been amazing after using your BELTONA Lotion for only 10 days. I could not lift my arm or draw my breath without the most agonising pain. I shall do all I can to make BELTONA known. Mrs. E.N. (unsolicited testimonial)

Invaluable in cases of  
Sprains Strains  
Rheumatism  
Neuritis  
Lumbago  
Fibrositis  
Sciatica, etc.

**BELTONA  
LOTION**

From Chemists 2/9½d, 4/0½d, 6/6½d. (inc. P.T.)

## "By Plane and Pony in Haiti"

will be the subject  
of a special article  
by the Editor in the  
JUNE ISSUE  
of

LIFE & LETTERS

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

her three children, but it was 'sold before she died to an old friend of the family'.

If this review seems to consist largely of quotations from the book it is Miss Toole's fault and not mine. On every page there are sentences, paragraphs, and stories which stand out and need repeating. I've already read it through twice and hope to do so many many times again. I have enjoyed the story of Our Old Man's tussle with Maggie better than I have enjoyed any novel for a long long time. Even those who loathe political biographies (as I do) should read this one.

FRED URQUHART

THE PLANTAGENETS. JOHN HARVEY. Batsford 18s.

MR. HARVEY is avowedly an apologist for kingship, and the examples selected are the Plantagenet kings of England, that is, from Henry II to Richard III. With cynical asperity one might remark that Mr. Harvey's selection is an argument for republicanism, but the judgment would be somewhat harsh, though Mr. Harvey invites it by constant apology for or mitigation of the faults of monarchs good, thoroughly bad, or indifferent.

His method of a short biography of each subject, with remarks on political and social history and on artistic achievement in various fields, tends to confusion. There is much here, but there is something lacking. It is neither biography proper nor connected history under chronology or topic: instead we have miscellaneous information combined with biographical studies of kings, and with generalizations over a wide field. As previously, though at greater length, in his *Gothic England*, we are given much interesting information on mediæval English artists, many hitherto unknown or not clearly identified. Some of Mr. Harvey's generalizations on and inferences from political and social history are certainly questionable, and may mislead the unwary. To take one or two examples: his remarks ('in vindication of English justice in the thirteenth century') on the murder of the child St. Hugh of Lincoln, are very misleading; the fact that the alleged murderer was with great barbarity dragged through Lincoln at a horse's tail before execution is completely overlooked. The records of this

LIFE AND LETTERS

THE  
HUDSON  
REVIEW

America's Major Literary Journal  
Now Available to English Readers

CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE:

|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| R. P. BLACKMUR | HERBERT READ    |
| KENNETH BURKE  | I. A. RICHARDS  |
| E. E. CUMMINGS | WALLACE STEVENS |
| WILLIAM EMPSON | ALLEN TATE      |
| THOMAS MANN    | EUDORA WELTY    |
| MARIANNE MOORE | YVOR WINTERS    |

IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES:

|                                      |                      |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>James Joyce, a Memoir</i>         | BY HIS BROTHER       |
| <i>Hamlet, the Analogy of Action</i> | FRANCIS FERGUSSON    |
| <i>Benjamin Britten</i>              | JOSEPH KERMAN        |
| <i>Wit in the Essay on Criticism</i> | WILLIAM EMPSON       |
| <i>Sartre Versus Literature</i>      | CLAUDE-EDMONDE MAGNY |
| <i>Andre Gide</i>                    | R. P. BLACKMUR       |
| <i>Joseph Conrad</i>                 | VERNON YOUNG         |

*New Poetry*      *New Fiction*      *Notes on Art*

---

Subscription, £1 per year, four numbers, post free

The Editor, William Arrowsmith  
The Queen's College  
Oxford

case hardly provide material for apology of any kind. Mr. Harvey takes it for granted that Edward Prince of Wales, son of Henry VI, was murdered by the victors of Tewkesbury, whereas the matter is at least open to serious doubt, and he may have been killed in the rout. The remarks on homosexuality, in connection with Richard II, are, to say the least, quite irrelevant, at any rate in their modern context.

There are the elements here of a very interesting book, but on the whole it is disappointing. To those who know something of medieval history it will please, annoy, and startle by turns; to those who do not it may prove very confusing. The most pleasing and least contentious feature is the illustration material, well selected and generally well reproduced. Granted the present high cost of book production, it seems hardly to justify the price of eighteen shillings for this work.

JOHN FREEMAN

THE WORKS OF M. P. SHIEL. A. REYNOLDS MORSE.

Fantasy Publishing Co. (California). \$6.00.

THIS bibliography is presented so that the reader can share the collector's thrill—industrious documentation is interspersed with enthusiastic notes. The whole book is, if one reads between the lines, a splendid explanation of why anyone collects anything.

In any case, collecting Shiel is a wonderful literary 'folly'. There are the novels which have the stories of strip-cartoon adventures (the men from other planets who excrete sticks of carbon, so high is their body temperature), and there is the real literary merit of *The Purple Cloud* which establishes Shiel for the critics, as Mr. Edward Shanks has pointed out, as a 'one-book man'. Yet Shiel's follies are gems for he was not the least bit ashamed of vulgarity and was capable of comparing the noises made in a dying woman's throat to the sounds produced by egg froth when 'it is trodden down by fairy rabbles that romp and trample it'.

Moreover, if, in the future, Shiel is forgotten as a writer, he will long be remembered as Felipe I of Redonda; and Mr. Morse gives details of the Hierarchy of the romantic Redonda Realm.

SANGRO, Duke of Redonda

## BOOKS TO POSSESS

|                     |                           |      |
|---------------------|---------------------------|------|
| Barbara Ward        | The West at Bay           | 12/6 |
| John Betjeman       | Selected Poems            | 8/6  |
| W. S. Churchill     | Maxims and Reflections    | 8/6  |
| John Bowle          | Unity of European History | 18/- |
| P. M. S. Blackett   | Atomic Energy             | 12/6 |
| W. B. Turrill       | British Plant Life        | 21/- |
| Hope Muntz          | The Golden Warrior        | 12/6 |
| T. S. Eliot         | A Symposium               | 10/6 |
| James Sutherland    | Eighteenth Century Poetry | 12/6 |
| Buxton Forman (Ed.) | Letters of John Keats     | 21/- |
| Martin Secker (Ed.) | The 1890's                | 21/- |
| Harold Child        | Essays and Reflections    | 8/6  |

**JOHN & EDWARD BUMPUS, LTD.**

Booksellers to His Majesty the King

**477 OXFORD ST., LONDON, W.I.**

Telephone : MAYfair 3601-5

Highest Prices paid for

GOOD STANDARD WORKS

Libraries, Modern Books and Sets purchased.

ROBERT CHRIS, 8 Cecil Court, LONDON, W.C.2  
TEMPLE BAR 6700

TO KEEP ABREAST WITH TO-DAY'S BOOKS, COME TO

**B LONDON'S BRIGHTEST BOOKSHOP**

You can **ALWAYS** see them in profusion here.

**BOOKS. Messengers of Goodwill !!**

Exclusive Notebooks; Engravers, Diestampers, and Printers;  
Visiting and Invitation Cards for Official and Professional use  
engraved promptly and accurately.

**S TRUSLOVE & HANSON**

14a CLIFFORD STREET (New Bond Street), W.I.

THE  
HUDSON  
REVIEW

America's Major Literary Journal  
Now Available to English Readers

CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE:

|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| R. P. BLACKMUR | HERBERT READ    |
| KENNETH BURKE  | I. A. RICHARDS  |
| E. E. CUMMINGS | WALLACE STEVENS |
| WILLIAM EMPSON | ALLEN TATE      |
| THOMAS MANN    | EUDORA WELTY    |
| MARIANNE MOORE | YVOR WINTERS    |

IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES:

|                                      |                      |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>James Joyce, a Memoir</i>         | BY HIS BROTHER       |
| <i>Hamlet, the Analogy of Action</i> | FRANCIS FERGUSSON    |
| <i>Benjamin Britten</i>              | JOSEPH KERMAN        |
| <i>Wit in the Essay on Criticism</i> | WILLIAM EMPSON       |
| <i>Sartre Versus Literature</i>      | CLAUDE-EDMONDE MAGNY |
| <i>Andre Gide</i>                    | R. P. BLACKMUR       |
| <i>Joseph Conrad</i>                 | VERNON YOUNG         |

New Poetry

New Fiction

Notes on Art

---

Subscription, £1 per year, four numbers, post free

The Editor, William Arrowsmith  
The Queen's College  
Oxford

# LIFE AND LETTERS

*continuing The London Mercury  
edited by Robert Herring*

Vol. 61

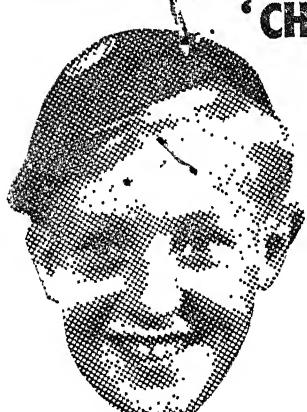
## CONTENTS

No. 142

|  |       |     |
|--|-------|-----|
| EDITORIAL  | .page | 181 |
| ARTICLES   |       |     |
| ARCADIANS AND BARBARIANS, by Margiad Evans   | 184   |     |
| LU HSÜN, by Wang Tso-Liang   | 200   |     |
| THE AMERICAN POET IN RELATION TO SCIENCE, by<br>Norman Pearson   | 206   |     |
| THE FLATMAN LETTERS, by Elizabeth Walsh  | 218   |     |
| POETRY   |       |     |
| ON SEEAN A PICTURE OF JOHANN CHRISTIAN FISCHER<br>IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, EMBRO by Maurice<br>Lindsay                     | 222   |     |
| THE ORPHAN, by Norman Nicholson  | 223   |     |
| PROMETHEUS, by Peter Hellings  | 225   |     |
| STORIES  |       |     |
| THE MESSAGE IN THE BOTTLE, by Mary Jackson   | 227   |     |
| A WINDMILL AND TWELVE CHERRY TREES, by<br>Cledwyn Hughes   | 237   |     |
| NOVELS OF INTEREST, by Hugh Bradenham  | 245   |     |
| REVIEWS OF BOOKS, by Maurice Carpenter, J. M.<br>Nosworthy, D. L. Hobman, Eric Walrond, Oswall<br>Blakeston, John Freeman. | 251   |     |
| Typography by Séan Jennett   |       |     |
| American Correspondent: Norman Holmes Pearson  |       |     |

The Editor is glad to consider MSS. though he cannot enter into correspondence over unsolicited contributions. No MS. will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. Editorial Communications should be addressed to LIFE AND LETTERS, 430 Strand, London, W.C. 2. The annual subscription is 20s. (post free), U.S.A. \$5.

*Once they called him*  
**'CHESTY CHARLIE'**



**LOOK AT HIM NOW!**

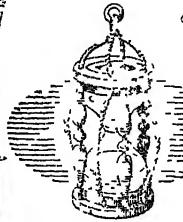
A bronchial baby, he *was* a problem, but careful rearing, aided by **POTTER'S ASTHMA REMEDY** worked wonders. Marvellous in ASTHMA, CATARRH, COUGHS, WHOOPING COUGH, CROUP. All chemists and stores. 2/5 a tin.



POTTER & CLARKE LTD., ARTILLERY LANE, LONDON, E.I.

A49B

*The Hour Glass*



Either as hour or half hour glasses, they were turned to mark the times of the watches, and as each hour was called by the quartermaster the ship's bell was struck. The taking of the noon sight, when the ship's day began, was a solemn ritual.

THE  
**"THREE CASTLES"**  
CIGARETTES  
20 for 3/10  
MANUFACTURED BY W. D. & H. O. WILLS

Branch of The Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain & Ireland), Ltd

A49B

# EDITORIAL

---

June, 1949

Of late, we have considerably increased the number of pages in our review section. Even so, the books on the table in my room seem never to dwindle. Moreover, I find that with the years—and we are not far off the end of our fourteenth—the subjects in which we are interested widen rather than narrow; our special numbers, further, bring in other literatures so that, try as we may, however much is reviewed, there remains more that we would like to. In an effort to catch up in part with the spring publishing, I have decided therefore to use this Editorial as a consideration of books which would otherwise have to wait. Since I am dealing with them, they are naturally on topics which appeal to me. The odd dozen or so recent books on Shakespeare must, however, wait for detailed examination.

First, the West Indies. *Katharine Dunham, her Dancers, Singers, and Musicians* (Ballet Publications. 20s.) is a photographic survey of the performance she recently brought to London under the title of *Caribbean Rhapsody*. The pictures were taken mainly by Roger Wood, during performance and from many angles, so that the album is not only a record of the entertainment, but an analysis of the dances and of Miss Dunham's methods. It may be hoped that it will pave the way for publication here of some of her own books. Light as is *Journey to Accompoong* for an anthropologist, nothing could be lighter than two books by a Member of Parliament, *Jamaican Journey* (Allen and Unwin, 10s. 6d.) and *The Land of Look Behind* (Latimer Press, 9s. 6d.) in which W. J. Brown has seen fit to inflict on us his account of two uneventful trips to Jamaica as the guest of Lord Beaverbrook. In the first, 1946, Lord Beaverbrook was not there, in the second, 1947, he was. On both occasions, Mr. Brown stayed in his host's residence at Montego Bay. This resort is in Jamaica, but not of it. Mr. Brown's opportunities of learning anything, had he wished, about the true life of the island were therefore limited. He did not so wish and contents himself

with a few superficial and inaccurate generalizations, spelling wrongly the names of both Bustamante and, more remarkably, Manley. Despite the titles, Jamaica does not come into the books very much, most of which are taken up with pedestrian account of his almost wholly uninteresting voyages, plentifully sprinkled with laborious small talk, embarrassingly naïve reflections on what he would no doubt call 'men and things', and smugly pompous banalities. For relief I turn to a selection from *The Paston Letters* by A. H. R. Ball (Harrap, 6s.) and to *Egyptian Religious Poetry* translated by Margaret Murray (John Murray, 6s.). This is in the Wisdom of the East Series and in addition to the translations, Dr. Murray writes an introduction of fifty-five pages which, like all her work, should not be missed. Readers will not need to be reminded that she has no high opinion of Akhenaten, 'the ruin of his country.'

Nearer home are *The World Is Wide Enough*, a novel in autobiographical form by Percy Coates (Lehman, 10s. 6d.) of the struggle for existence of a Derbyshire working lad who, with a friend, took to the roads at the beginning of the century, and two more books by William Kent, of which I prefer *Mine Host London* (Nicholson and Watson, 8s. 6d.), an anthology of visitors' impressions of 'the flower of cities all' from earliest times. A similar, but far larger, anthology referring to Switzerland is Professor G. R. de Beer's *Travellers in Switzerland* (Oxford, 25s.). This work of nearly 600 pages lists, first chronologically, travellers, with their itinerary, and a typical quotation or anecdote. Next, in a topographical section they are enumerated under the names of places visited, and finally, alphabetically, there is a bibliography of travellers' books. The volume begins with the year 941 and ends with 1945. Twenty-three handsome illustrations further add to the value of an indispensable work of reference. *Mountain Paths* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 12s. 6d.) is by H. E. G. Tyndale, editor of *The Alpine Journal* and one of the elect band of Wykehamists who were taught the joys of guideless mountaineering by R. L. G. Irving. Mr. Tyndale, having traced First Affections, takes us, by chapters, round Arolla, Zermatt, Breuil, Mont Blanc, the Graian Alps and the Julian Alps. The quiet culture and wit of

his mind and the easy precision of his style are such that his chapters on Saas and the Loetschental make me hardly able to wait to be where I hope to be by the time these words are in print.

Over four hundred thousand copies of *Premier de Cordée*, a novel of climbing, have been sold since its original publication in France in 1941. It now appears as *First of the Rope* (R. Frison-Roche. Methuen, 10s. 6d.) translated into English by that good climber and mountain-writer, Janet Adam Smith. It is a story of the guides of Chamonix, and in particular of one who loses his nerve after an accident on the Aiguille du Dru, but deliberately sets out to regain it, and finally succeeds with a magnificent ascent of the Aiguille Vert. I found the book frightening and absorbing, and now I should like the same translator to give us another guide's book, *A L'Assaut des Quatze Mille* by Raymond Lambert (Editions de la Frégate, Chambéry).

These books lead thoughts to holidays and so I make no bones about mentioning *Happy Days and Holidays* (edited by Oswall Blakeston, Phoenix, 10s. 6d.). This book, in which I have a personal interest, as I contributed a description of a flight to the West Indies in a Tudor IV, is an anthology of holidays, written specially for the occasion by ten different hands. John Arlott devotes himself, with evocative memories of childhood, to watching cricket; Terence Greenidge to branch-line railways; John Gawsorth (whose *Collected Poems* have been put out lately by Sidgwick and Jackson) writes on a book-collecting holiday; L. T. C. Rolt on the canals of England. None of the holidays is conventional and the two best pieces, to my mind, are Kenneth Hopkins writing on a man who for years was always at the end of his firm's holiday roster until, once, returning from his usual fortnight in December, he found he had been put first, so that he had to go away again at once—in January; and the editor, Oswall Blakeston, writes on a holiday instigated by wrongly addressed postcards, saying how splendid a certain Greek island was, so that in self-defence, he found himself taking a holiday he had never planned in a place to which he had never thought of going. Mr. Blakeston's eye is as keen as his wit, and the writing here matches both.

# ARCADIANS AND BARBARIANS

(Or Remarks On Some English Songs, *continued from No. 141*)

---

## MARGIAD EVANS

### IV

Before proceeding to a particular glance at our sea songs, I want to quote from four of the songs I know and love most—‘Sweet Nightingale’, ‘The Bailiff’s Daughter’, ‘The Golden Vanity’, and ‘Jerusalem the Golden’, all of which were given to me through a nursemaid who used to sing them to us.

I have mentioned this girl before. She must have been remarkable. Her name was Gladys; her father was a keeper on a big local estate, and her mother was German. Perhaps this strain brought her her musical taste, and her healthy, beautiful voice, which was an outstandingly good contralto. She was a kind girl and generous with all her gifts and her gentle vitality. I should like to give a sketch of her; but here is not the place.

I was very young, for although I remember her songs and her singing clearly, I can only see her and her environment in spots. One of these sun-spots in the blankness was a visit to her home when she took us all to see her parents. My recollection is of a big sort of a wooden cabin where the keeper showed us the flattened skins he was curing, fastened to the walls; and then part of the long way back home in the evening, across yellow-golden park-land, Gladys singing to us as we walked. And the song she chose for our steps that summer dusk was ‘Sweet Nightingale’.

The story in the song is a simple affectionate dialogue between a pair of country sweethearts. He asks her to come with him and listen to the nightingale.

My sweetheart come along  
do you hear the sweet song  
the clear notes of the nightingale flow.

Do you hear the fond tale  
 of the sweet nightingale,  
 as she sings in the valley below,  
 as she sings in the valley below?\*

She demurs. He persuades her, slowly—

Pretty Betty don't fail  
 and I'll carry your pail.

and finally she goes with him, and

The couple agreed  
 and were married with speed  
 and soon to the church they did go  
 They heard the fond tale—etc.

There are of course many verses to this sober spring history, and the poem as a poem is scarcely above the average, except that as a song poem it can hardly be rated too highly. That is, as an English song-poem it is a musical rarity: for every stress is in the right place, every open vowel perfectly designed to display a lovely ring in exactly the right moment. On the reiterated lines 'As she sang in the valley below', there is the most charming little natural-seeming cadenza, which seems introduced as an innocent illustration of certain beautiful phrases in the nightingale's song. No other traditional song captures more exquisitely its subject. Tender, delicate, clear, clever, nobody who has heard this rare old song is ever anything but enchanted with it. It pleases equally the naive and the sophisticated.

It is rare, for although I heard it later sung in a school, I have never been able to find in any book either the text or the air. I have this masterpiece by heart alone. It is a soprano song and is at its best in the key of D. From indications of the words, and certain seventeenth-century 'dids' and 'dos' it would seem to be from that period. As with the cuckoo in the vivid 'Cuckoo Song' a knowledge of the nightingale's habits is palpable throughout. To talk about it further would be to encumber perfection—to hear it sung is pure happiness.

Most people have heard parts of 'The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington'. Boosey includes it, labelled simply 'Old English'. It is a long and most entertaining ballad, with a monotonous, quavering, and unvaried air, but with very pretty words. The texture is as sprigged cotton print, sun-bonnets and hay-cocks. It tells of the love of the squire's son for a poor but *not* simple maid. She would not look at him, and 'because he loved her so' he was sent away to London Town. After seven years, perhaps of reflection, 'the bailiff's daughter put on 'mean' attire'

And straight to London she would go  
about him to enquire.

And as she went  
along the road  
through weather hot and dry  
she rested on a grassy load (hay cock)  
and her love came riding by.

'Give me a penny  
thou 'prentice good,  
relieve a maid forlorn.'  
'Before I give thee a penny sweetheart,  
pray tell me where you were born?'

'Oh I was born  
at Islington—'  
'Then tell me if you know  
the bailiff's daughter of that place?'  
'She died sir, long ago.'

'If she be dead  
then take my horse,  
my saddle and bridle also;  
for I will to some distant land  
where no man shall me know.'

Of course she leaps up and discloses herself, enraptured by his fidelity, and on that rapturous meeting the song ends. It is good: it is pure Barbarian, both words and tune, but it is slightly tedious. Gladys, unerringly, used it as a lullaby.

The ardent words of 'Jerusalem the Golden' were written by St. Bernard of Clairvaux about 1150. But it has become very English. I found the full text in 'Songs that Never Die' an undated Victorian collection which belonged to my grandfather. It is a noble and fervent song rather than a hymn: in it we meet with a great poem entwined with great music. This translation<sup>1</sup> is by Neale who must have been a real poet: indeed if this be a hymn, I can find no difference between it and the *Jerusalem* poems of Blake (except ampler diction): or say, George Herbert's *Evening Star*. The tune is large and tragic, and through it runs as it were, a golden flavour, truly as pure as honey.

Jerusalem the golden  
 with milk and honey blest,  
 beneath thy contemplation  
 sink heart and voice to rest:  
 I know not, oh I know not  
 what joys await me there,  
 what radiancy of glory,  
 what bliss beyond compare.

They stand those halls of Zion  
 all jubilant with song,  
 and bright with many an angel  
 and all the martyr throng.  
 There is the throne of David,  
 and there from toil released,  
 the shout of them that triumph,  
 the song of them that feast.

And they who with their leader  
 have triumphed in the fight,  
 forever and forever  
 are clad in robes of white.  
 Oh land that seest no sorrow!  
 Oh state that fears no strife!  
 Oh royal land of flowers!  
 Oh realm and home of light!

<sup>1</sup> I have since been told that the poem is an original one and not a translation.

Oh sweet and blessed country  
the home of God's elect!  
Oh sweet and pleasant country  
that eager hearts expect,  
Jesus in mercy bring us  
to that dear land of rest  
Who art with God the Father  
and spirit ever blessed.

These noble and passionate words lifted upon clear, strong voices, flow like a great golden river. But I pass from them now to the last song, the oldest, and in my opinion the finest of them all—the tragic 'Golden Vanity'—Gladys Cicester's favourite and my own. This ballad, the most beautiful that I have heard anywhere, in all my life, is really a sea-song, but is so entirely apart even from the best of them, in its strangeness, its mystery and allure, that I prefer to place it where it is—alone. George Barker, in a recent criticism remarked of a poem, that one could not distinguish between the poem and the words: in 'the Golden Vanity' one cannot distinguish between the words and the voice, so beautiful is the music of the vowel sounds and the air which releases them. Boosey gives the full text, but not as Gladys sang it. The opening verse, as she had it, was marvellous from the ominous:

"There was a ship came forth"—

with its beat like the thud of waves:

A musical score in G major, 2/4 time. The melody is in the treble clef. The lyrics are: "There was a ship came forth". The music consists of eighth and sixteenth note patterns.

to the long smooth wail of the chorus:

A musical score in G major, 2/4 time. The melody is in the treble clef. The lyrics are: "Low- land, low- land That sailed up in the Low- land Sea." The instruction "Very Slowly" is written above the staff.

Low- land, low- land That sailed up in the Low- land Sea.

Boosey's version ruins this splendid stanza by omitting the

word 'forth', which makes the ship stand out in sight against the sea-line. But his words are all inferior to Gladys Cicester's. And he gives the key of C instead of D. It is the story of a very desperate and lawless deed done to a ship long, long ago, by the ship's boy of *The Golden Vanity*.

There was a ship came forth  
from the North Country,  
and the name of that ship was  
the Golden Vanity.  
And they feared she might be taken  
by the Turkish Enemy  
that sailed up in the Lowland, Lowland sea.

There are seven stanzas, in which is given a tale of ancient cruelty and retribution which might belong to the time of the crusades. The Golden Vanity fears a sinister ship, but whether this ship is in fact called The Turkish Enemy, or whether she is an infidel craft, is not clear. The Captain makes many wild promises to anyone who will offer to swim and sink her, and the boy, tempted by the gold and silver, and the Captain's daughter for a bride, jumps overboard, and actually does sink 'the Turkish Enemy' by hewing holes in her below the water line, with his boarder axe. The deed accomplished, he returns, but—

the Captain would not heed  
for his promise he would need  
to leave him in the Lowland Sea.

The boy swims round to the port side, and his mates pick him up, but he dies of exhaustion. The last verse describes his burial.

Then his mess-mates took him up  
but on the deck he died;  
and they sewed him in his hammock  
which was so large and wide—  
they threw him over-board  
and he drifted with the tide.  
He sank down in the  
Lowland, Lowland,  
He sank down in the Lowland Sea.

There are eyes in this song. Somebody saw it. Those strange detached sea-names, they invoke a glimmering stateliness, waves and shadows, clouds, the blood-crossed sails, the bloody fear, the dreadful lonely deed, without one word of description. The wild tune is like a requiem, surpassing in loneliness and grief any sounds I have ever heard. It is a matchless sea song and one which beyond all others recalls the cadences of Melville's genius. As a child it made me shudder. Not 'Shenandoah' with its irrelevant spell, can so wake the harkening terror of the deep waters which is waiting in us all.

Since one must end, here is a wonderful old round song, the best of many good. The air, a beauty, is by Purcell, the words, an epitaph, are anonymous.

Under this stone  
lies Gabriel John,  
in the Year of Our Lord  
one thousand and one.

Cover his head  
with turf or stone,  
'Tis all one  
with turf or stone,  
'Tis all one.

Pray for the Soul  
of Gentle John.  
If you please you may  
or let it alone,  
'tis all one.

## V

English Songs of the Sea. In an introductory note on them in *Songs that never Die* published by H. P. Cohen in 1894, there are many telling descriptions of sea-songs, or Shanties. The 'poems' we are told, are doggerel, with an occasional rhyme 'thrown in for flavour'. But wild and spontaneous as these creations appeared, they conformed to various rules, the strictest being the particular task to which each shanty was

the accompaniment. Each proper and complete shanty had a double chorus which was sung alternately. The famous 'Shenandoah' is an example. The composer of this haunted cry, long and solitary and echoless as a gull's, is unknown. And so are all the others. One feels it is not a single anonymity but a plural, behind these songs, and that a word, a phrase put in here and there by many mouths made whole the curiously irrelevant unanimity of the shanty. There is one however, which is essentially English, and which holds together like a poem in a single tongue—the fine, rhythmic 'I'll go no more a-roving.'

A-roving, a-roving  
since roving's been my ruin,  
I'll go no more a-roving  
with you fair maid.

But the sea-shanty is no more English than the crew of a sailing ship used to be, and belongs to 'no land except the wooden and polyglot islands of wind-jammers. Also the death of sail has made sea-shanties pretty well an expert's business which I am certainly not fit to discuss.

But when we come to the English sea song proper we shall see that the division of Arcadians and Barbarians holds good, and better than ever. 'The Mermaid'—if we except the rather spurious 'To all you ladies now at land'—is probably our oldest and queerest of them all. Boosey gives a sound text of this extraordinary, jolly ballad of foreboding and fate, set to its rumbustious tune. The ship sailed on a Friday, and when she was scarce stood out to sea, the crew espied 'a fair pretty maid, with a comb and a glass in her hand.'

Then up spoke the Captain of our gallant ship  
who at once did our peril see:  
'I have married a wife in fair London Town  
and this night she a widow will be.'

And so on—cook and cabin boy all speaking, all lamenting until the ship goes down to the bottom with all hands (Boosey leaves out the cook) as they lacked a lifeboat. Again the word 'below' is used repetitively, as in 'Sweet Nightingale' and 'Early

one morning'. Our forbears knew their singable syllables. 'The Mermaid' is a song for men: the air is a rough, burly one, of smallish compass. It, and the lyric, are finest Barbarian of true sea-vintage.

The great Barbarian of the sea was Charles Dibden, author and composer of 'Tom Bowling'. Dibden was a true folk poet and lover of the sea: he had things to say of the Parlour Sailor and his effusions. Of this composer, it is said, in *Songs that Never Die*:

'There never has been but one man's songs written on shore, popular with blue-jackets; but one man's songs that sea-faring men have declared redolent of pitch and tar and oakum, written with the true spirit of a sailor; but one man's songs that the ship's fiddlers scraped on Saturday night at sea, before the toast of sweethearts and wives—and that man was Dibden. And Dibden was a landlubber of the purest sort.' He was not. He had been often at sea. It was not that, but the truth in him, however, which enabled him to write words of musical simplicity and lyric power. It was this in himself he was rudely expressing, when he daubed in words these rough lines:

'Let Swabs with their vows, their palaver and lies  
sly flattery's silk sails be trimming,  
swear their Polls are all angels dropped down from the skies.  
I your angels don't like—I loves women.'

Coarse canvas! But it was this principle of sincerity which caused him to produce that homely, most moving panegyric 'Tom Bowling' in which quite ordinary words again reach English lyrical feeling. There is not a single 'poetic' or transcendent phrase in it, not a single image, and but one steady metaphor: the language is limited, not imaginative, not fervent, yet it gets to the interior of things. Dibden wrote many fine sea-songs, but he never again produced a song like this. Perhaps because it was said to have been inspired by the memory of his own brother.

Here a sheer hulk lies poor Tom Bowling  
the darling of our crew,  
no more he'll hear the tempest howling  
for Death has broached him to.

His form was of the manliest beauty,  
his heart was kind and soft,  
faithful below he did his duty  
and now he's gone aloft.

Tom never from his word departed  
his virtues were so rare;  
his friends were many and true-hearted  
his Poll was kind and fair.

And then he'd sing so blithe and jolly  
full many a time and oft,  
but mirth is turned to melancholy,  
for Tom has gone aloft.

Yet shall poor Tom find pleasant weather  
when he who all commands,  
shall give to call Life's crew together  
the word to pipe all hands.  
Thus Death who kings and tars despatches  
in vain Tom's life has doffed:  
for though his body's under hatches  
his soul is gone aloft.

The song is not a very old one, yet, in spirit it returns to simpler times and tunes. Contrast its unrestrained feeling with the Arcadian sea-song 'Black Eyed Susan' by Gay which is set to a very lovely old English air. This is in *The Beggars Opera*. Verses 2 and 3 run thus :—

Believe not what the landsmen say  
who tempt with doubt thy constant mind,  
they tell you sailors when away  
in every port a mistress find.

Yet, yes! believe them when they tell ye so,  
for thou art present, for thou art present  
whereso'er I go.

Oh Susan, Susan lovely dear  
my vows for ever true remain  
let me kiss off that falling tear,  
we only part to meet again!  
Change as ye list, ye winds  
my heart shall be  
the faithful compass, the faithful compass  
that still points to thee.

This charming eighteenth-century song shows its beauties and its vices best when set beside one like the following—‘Barney Buntline’

One night came on a hur-ri-cane,  
the sea was mountains rolling,  
when Barney Buntline chewed his quid  
and said to Billy Bowline:  
‘A strong sou-wester’s blowing Bill,  
oh can’t you hear it roar now?  
God help ’em how I pities all  
unhappy folk on shore now!’

The air to this song is like an accompaniment of exclamation marks, or the clapping of hands. The rude catchy doggerel has no poetry, but is full of wooden rhythm. When you hear it you can see the baccy smoke rolling in the fo’c’sle, the knees of the sailors jogging as they thud their boots, and the lanterns reeling. Nothing testifies more to the variety and richness of our traditional range, than our sea-songs. The few I have mentioned have nothing in common with one another. Only in our two famous naval songs, is there a likeness. ‘Hearts of Oak,’ by David Garrick, and ‘Rule Britannia’ by Thomson (set to music as stirring as the *Marseillaise*, by Dr. Arne) are under-rated to-day because of their bombastic tone. Yet *Rule Britannia* has an arcadian charm:

To thee belongs the rural reign  
thy cities shall with commerce shine;  
all thine shall be the subject main,  
and every shore it circles, thine.

, The muses, still with freedom found  
shall to thy happy coast repair,  
Blest Isle! with matchless beauty crowned,  
and manly hearts to guard the fair.

Whatever may be said in timely extenuation of the opening verses, have not the last century and a half brought to pass the gentler prophecies in the last? When the muses shall be European aliens, as they are becoming rapidly, may they

manage to reach us in safety and remain with us on ground that is not entirely military and municipal. Rule Britannia!

## VI

If we read over some of the songs I have quoted, carefully, not by sight but by measure, and by the inner sense of sound; and then again other famous 'free' lyrics which have not been written for, or set to music (though beautifully and musically compact in themselves) we shall learn not only quite a good deal about English folk rhythm, but we shall discover, if our ear be sure and sensitive, a difference which will strike upon the extra half sense of the musically-poetically fused mind. Begin with 'Jerusalem the Golden'. Tune, in it, is inherent: it is not a covert possibility, but is both in the content and what subtly defines the content. 'Jerusalem the Golden' has musical margins: tune, it might be said, is the page on which it is printed, and one may think of the punctuation as rests but not as wilful silence. That is, the pace is predetermined and the length of the pauses not arbitrary. The rhythm is fully occupied and the time musical, not speaking time. In a way this clips the poem and makes it so insistent rhythmically, that to a 'free' ear it may seem jingling, but to the measured ear, it is promising. This effect is obtained whether the air be known or unknown. I have never heard one of the lyrics in Campion's *Book of airs* set to music, and yet in reading them I am aware that they are pregnant with tune. For to set poems to music is to let music occupy them, occupy them fully, but *not* overflow them, as Arne and other great Arcadian composers did and even the spontaneous genius of Schubert when he set Shakespeare's songs. Schubert has not 'occupied'. 'Hark, Hark the Lark,' and Arne's 'Blow, Blow thou winter wind' has had to expand thus from Shakespeare's wondrous song into a monstrosity in order to contain the air:

Blow, blow thou winter wind  
thou art not so unkind  
as man's ingratitude.  
as man's ingratitude.

Thy tooth is not so keen  
 because thou art not seen,  
 thy tooth is not so keen  
 because thou art not seen.  
 al'ho' thy breath be rude,  
 altho' thy breath be rude.  
 although thy breath be rude!

How awful! How awful written, how awful sung. And how common a stretching. Turning from this to 'The Oak and the Ash' and 'Barbara Allen' two of our oldest, most lovely and perfect traditional songs, both pure anonymous Barbarian, how beautifully do we hear music living in the poems. Without crowding, without stretching the words into repetitions, the musical sounds possess themselves of every phonetic sound. 'Barbara Allen' is the most perfect example we possess of an air inherent in the lyric from the moment of conception. The type of tune which actually it has, may be *read* silently, in the words. Our English folk songs are simple things but they are rich in the possession of such oneness. Apart from some poetic power it is their only claim to art, but it is not a common claim. In such songs as these music and words are not so separate as to be entwined—but they are to each other what the river bed is to the river, what the leaf is to the sap—indivisible. It is in hearing the tune in the words and knowing that they had not to be cut down or expanded to fit it, that our songs declare the English people the creator of a pure and individual genius. Arne cut, sewed, patched, and seamed the words of Shakespeare out of which his music burst. The unknown composer of 'The Oak and the Ash' got the poem undamaged into his, left nothing out, added nothing—and held them together as freely as a small star holds its delicate spark. It is almost always so with beautiful old Barbarian songs—seldom with Arcadian. Even in the exquisite 'Cherry Ripe' of C. E. Horn—a faultless, marvellous musical thing in itself—Herrick's poem is mangled. Which is the more troubling because Herrick's are not 'free' lyrics—they are full of inherent sonority, and an incipient melody. Of course I do not mean *verbal* melody. All fine lyrics give this out. Some types are suggestive of a musical theme that fits them, others

are impossibly 'free'. That is they are unfixable—in sense and even in sound they spread and diffuse themselves beyond the laws which combine music. Of such, I think, are most of Shakespeare's songs. But we cannot say, believing in music, in Bach, in Mozart, in Beethoven's mind, that *any* man's conception is beyond music, itself universal, unless that man is a disciple of silence. Which Shakespeare certainly was not. Equally it is impossible to think that Shakespeare's measure is not 'musical'. Why then does music fail with his songs? I am sure that the answer is not altogether the failure of composers to interpret them, but that lyric itself is a free or not free thing from its first moment of creation. George Herbert is 'free', and William Blake also. Campion is not, neither is Herrick. It is my supposition that a great poet may have a greatly musical and rhythmic intellect *without being a great lover of music*. From their poetry we may venture to wonder whether Shakespeare loved to sit and listen to music, and whether Herrick did not.

If the idea of free and not free lyrical poetry, have a basis of truth in it, it explains partly the failure of Shakespeare's songs to get into tradition. Too great efforts by too great men have been made to set them to music—had they been inherently suitable, they would have met their tune among the people, as did the no plainer and no truer words of the anonymous rural poets. The songs of Shakespeare are imminently suited to the tradition of the people of England—but Shakespeare's reputation attracted elaboration.

The period from 1660 onwards saw not a revival of music but a tremendous development in it. The period which began with the development of the power of the stringed instruments through Nicola Amati, Stradivari, and the school of the Italian liutaros; the period which produced Tartini, the *first* violinist who conceived the possibilities of the violin, which saw working the enormous genius of Bach, established Handel and continued and culminated in Mozart and Beethoven and Schubert—this urgent, rich, and immortal period of about one hundred and seventy years, saw dawning to perfection the art of singing. The elaborate, the difficult, art of singing. And the solo role, the specialist voice, the public display and opera voice. So that at the very time when traditional song was

lustiest, family, or semi-private singing, madrigal singing and singing as a natural integral part of a gentle education, began to die out. The gentry began to go to listen. The people, kept at work, kept on singing. Came the sharp division. Composers like Arne, with the display voice in mind, turned to the poets of established reputation. Simplicity vanished. It has never returned, for the specialist voice remained. Thus I believe, much great and naturally suitable lyric verse was diverted from tradition.

The arcadian art of embellishment in melody was perfected in order to display the most beautiful parts of the beautiful and highly-developed voice, thus copying, in reality, that instinct in Nature whereby song-birds repeat their loveliest phrases! English traditional singing had always included this in some measure, but very innocently and monotonously, with a single repeated line, or a modest chorus, as in 'Sweet Nightingale'. To soar into the intricacies and elaboration of words, as in Arne's songs, was, happily, impossible to the cheerful village warbler. Not however entirely to the protection of his own self-created notes, since the last forty years has shown an increasing and meddlesome intrusion into traditional airs by symphony and 'tone poem'—to the utter ruin of their meaning and beauty. Also there are few educated voices which are capable of entering unadorned song—they have neither the innocence of approach, nor the knowledge of what is behind what they are singing. Certain very good English singers who have kept their freshness with their learning have achieved it. One remembers Dorothy Silk singing 'The Lass with the Delicate Air' so bewitchingly in her lovely learned voice, formed upon Bach and Handel. The very great too, like Patti. And certain lark-like folk singers keeping tradition clear with beautiful, devoted, and cheering effect. It is small reward for these understanding musicians when they are told, as a great conductor did recently, that the English don't produce voices. Perhaps we don't. Not epic voices, not operatic and dramatic and coloratura singers maybe, but very beautiful, very pure, very suitable lyrical ones nevertheless. And surely nobody but a great conductor would disparage the nightingale because he is not an aviary?

The voice which contains that something which makes a stillness about it, which seems, in a gathering, to be warbling 'at eve when all the woods are still'—that apt, that unassuming, unadmonitory voice, we *do* grow, let Elsie Suddaby and Isobel Baillie sing it! They would be perfection, but if they would, in English songs. But we must confess, the blame is ours, if tradition is never sung, for as the people made it, the people never utter it; and the matter after all rests with them. The Welsh sing their songs; sentiment has publicized and popularized the Scottish; ours, outside England are not even known to exist. Some French friends of mine used to praise the 'Scottish Lieder'. I listened, and then I sang to them 'The Oak and the Ash' and 'Sweet Nightingale' and 'The Golden Vanity', slowly so that they could hear the poems within the airs. They said the songs were 'un merveille'—they called themselves amazed, and wondered to a standstill why they had never heard these things before. I told them: 'They do not go abroad,' and thought how seldom they were heard at home.

# LU HSÜN

---

## WANG TSO-LIANG

ONE must start from the point where Lu Hsün is invariably launched by his critics, namely, that he is a satirist. He could not choose but be one. He wrote his *Ah Q* and his 'miscellaneous essays' at a time when only satire could be effective. Satire is ever allied to surfeit; it thrusts open the inner corruption of a society at the very moment when the society has acquired, what with wigs and fine dress, wine and courtesans, a most civilized look. In the case of Lu Hsün's China there was not even that surface glitter. A few lighthouses might be beaming decoratively on the eastern and southern coasts, a few railways might be stretching like phosphorescent ribbons into the dark plains of North China, but further inland, in the villages and small towns, taxes were being collected sixty years in advance, and family elders could still punish by death delinquent young females found guilty of illicit love. There, in spite of the easy revolution of 1911, Old China was still sitting pretty, though after the bad mauling it had received since the Opium War at the hands of English merchants and American missionaries, it was an Old China with its apparatus of torture intact but its humanism in fragments. The literary situation was hardly better. Hu Shih had made titanic efforts to make people write as they spoke, but the old *wen-yan* Chinese was still government Chinese, business Chinese, newspaper Chinese. The few 'new' intellectuals who were practising writing in the colloquial manner had put on airs of a different kind: they were precious, and would not bother to look beyond the shallow textbooks and second-rate poets they had read at Western universities. There was some effort at achieving a new pattern of things, but for the moment the pattern adopted was only distinguished by its bizarre eclecticism.

It is before such a backdrop that *Ah Q* makes his bow. He is a figure of whom many Chinese are secretly ashamed, as they

are ashamed of the narrow, twisting streets, the pungent smells of their cities and, always, of the bound feet of their grandmothers. For Ah Q is the typical little man of a Chinese small town, with all the faults inherent in the Chinese character, but withal an honest, harmless, even lovable person. Lu Hsun leads him through the mock heroic of a put-up revolution and a speedy counter-revolution. It is not so much a time of falling towers, as one of swift shiftings of fronts. Ah Q does not change fast enough, and consequently is caught on the wrong side of the fence at the arrival of the hangman. When he is shot, the soldiers pass on, and the small town, having witnessed what is taken to be a New Order, sees the same round of courtesy calls among the same old faces of the local gentry.

They are the imperishable, the local gentry. But one is not allowed for a moment to suppose that they are the sort of urbane characters that occidental-lovers of China have fondly taken the Chinese to be. There is no talk of art, of porcelain and landscape paintings in the world of Lu Hsun. There is a flat provinciality. The gentry never miss an opportunity to flaunt their morality and their solid burgher virtues in all the ringing but vapid words only a Confucian is capable of mustering, and yet the moment when they see a female beggar their first reaction is a gnawing regret. What wonders will not a good bath do to that outwardly dirty but none the less warm young body! Thus thinks 'Mr. Shih Ming', one of the imperishables who appear in the story 'A Cake of Soap', and presently he could even hear the noise made by her soapy hand when it rubs now her back, now her neck, now her bosom, now her thighs. In a later story, in *Old Tales Newly Collected*, Lu Hsun makes a gentry-scholar, one of the 'scientific' historians, who easily reminds us of the savants on Swift's Flying Island, walk under the outsize legs of a giant goddess, whose mythological origin he has discredited. Coarse, one would say, though the word calls to one's mind the strange fact that almost all great satirists are obscene and care for coarse details. Lu Hsun is under no obligation to be shabby-genteel. He must go down to the base and the unpleasant. But through his art the base and the unpleasant, as well as the dullness and ennui of a dusty

Chinese town, have suddenly taken on 'the huge proportions of immortality'.

The trick, once again, is as old as satire itself. Lu Hsün has been able to achieve all this because he is what all great satirists are, a story-teller and a stylist. He is economical with his means, executing in bold rapid strokes. His classicism in this matter is in sharp contrast to the verbosity of other Chinese writers: he has too much to say and no time to waste. For the subtle blending of fantasy and verisimilitude, of the bitter and the tender, of general situations and topical allusions, Lu Hsün has been admired, imitated, but not equalled. But it is as a master of words that Lu Hsün has fascinated even his bitterest enemies. Not, however, because he is a stylist in the esoteric, *avant-garde* sense. He has no love for new-fangled terms, which the Western-educated students are only too ready to counterfeit. Instead, he uses old words, even insists on using the old forms of common words—there is something definitely coquettish about his etymological pedantry—only he puts them in a totally colloquial, at times very Western, syntax. As a result, the old coinages from the classics not only shine with a rich antique glow, but have a keen new edge that cuts deep into the marrows.

This sense of style has come to the rescue of even his most occasional writings and made them a delight to read. China has abounded in literary quarrels, and in his time Lu Hsün was the storm-centre of the particularly venomous ones. With his views that literature must be *engagée*, Lu Hsün ran afoul of the university wits, talking languidly of Art in their perch in Peking and Shanghai. His radical political views got him into serious trouble with the officials. To deal effectively with his enemies, who were thus many and powerful, he has invented a new genre of writing, of what his detractors call 'miscellaneous' essays. These are short articles of a few dashing, biting lines, full of point, all teeth and claws, but also packed with innuendo of the most intriguing sort. They are the daggers for street-corner combats, the terrible commandoes out on a sudden raid. In Lu Hsün's hands they were so deadly that paper after paper, periodical after periodical, for which Lu Hsün had written, had to be closed down by government

orders. But always Lu Hsun managed to find a new window somewhere in the sprawling city of Shanghai, from which, under a different pen-name, he continued to snipe and kill, until after a few rounds it too was overwhelmed. Many of his fellow writers were gaoled and shot, and<sup>8</sup> Lu Hsun himself barely avoided arrest by changing his address once every few hours. His was therefore the bitter, running fight waged under a hundred pseudonyms across the desert of despair. There is something heroic about the polemic literature of that period, because it was largely the literature of the underground. Many to this day lament Lu Hsun's tremendous atrophy of energy in the writing of these disputatious essays, energy which might have been turned to the writing of more permanent literature. But perhaps one may also venture to think that lamentable as was the occasion that called forth these essays, they are not exactly dated. They are not the casualties of a polemic war, any more than the writings of Defoe and Swift, as well as the tracts of the passionate seventeenth-century English religious writers, are the casualties of a pamphleteering war. There is the same vigour, the same human interest, the same firm mastery of the medium at hand. With Lu Hsun, there is also an undying faith in the future of man.

This faith has taken the strange form of the many translations he has made of Russian and other Slav works. It must be confessed that to at least one reader a great part of these translations are unreadable. But translations are essentially Lu Hsun's sorties into the regions of experimental writing, of which the first startling feature is his torture of the Chinese language. A good classical scholar, Lu Hsun knows all the tricks of Chinese written characters. He is perhaps not a little fascinated by them. But he knows also that in this fascination lies the horror: more stubborn men than he have been softened beyond all recognition by the things that these square characters stand for. He strives, therefore, not merely for synonyms and adverbial phrases, which he coins right and left with an abandon alarming probably to Hu Shih himself, but he must have an exact similarity in structure. Consciously and deliberately, he tries to make the Chinese he employs in the translations read like a foreign language. It is as if he had

thought that by breaking down the Chinese syntax, he was also breaking down the walls built round the Chinese spirit. He does not chime in with the general eulogy of the merits of Anglo-American democracy. Probably he is too disgusted with the gentlemen of the new learning to give their words a fair hearing. Instead, his translations have endeared to the Chinese imagination the collective farms basking in the warm Black Sea sun. He has become the main link between China and the deep, troubled mind of Eastern Europe. But to get there, what strange country one has to travel across! For the truth is, only the great name of Lu Hsun could make his readers plod through those heavily written pages, difficult, halting, dark with an alien, imposed grammar. He is least readable when he is most consciously carrying out his own theories of translation. But there are times when even he seems to be weary of keeping up the tremendous effort. In one of those relapses or releases, he has turned out his most satisfying piece of translation, Gogol's *Dead Souls*. It is so good that one looks in vain for a like achievement among the translations of Western European and American works, in spite of the fact that most Chinese writers have acquired their English assiduously, while Lu Hsun did not even understand Russian. He had to work through a Japanese version, but Gogol fits him with such a completeness that even at two removes Lu Hsun's rendering has caught the soul of the original. Gogol, indeed, fits Lu Hsun better than do the Soviet Neanderthals after the Flood. Both are what the true revolutionary would call prehistoric. Both are masters of the grey, torturing mood before the dawn. Both are unhappy, bitter, consumed by a tenderness toward the humble, inarticulate people in the small towns buried deep in the two vast, dark continents called China and Russia.

Here, however, Lu Hsun begins to shed his disguise. For, with his visions of the future, and his intolerable wrestle with the past, Lu Hsun is only a satirist in disguise. He finds his own compassion for men so overpowering that in his *Wild Grass* he becomes lyrical, bursting out into a series of prose poems that have haunted many of his readers with their nostalgic, even fragile, beauty. It is perhaps not his best work, but it is symptomatic of the sentimentalism that has characterized

China's new writing from the very outset. There is no self-pity in this sentimentalism, nothing tearful or mawkish, because it was born of a great humanitarian movement which, following in the wake of the Chinese Renaissance of 1918, demanded equal rights for women, advocated social\* justice, sought to narrow the gap between the well-fed, eloquent few in the cities and the dumb many in the countryside. However easily one may equate it with the rise of bourgeois culture in the coastal cities and condemn it as such, the movement started as a movement of love. It is this preoccupation with one's love for fellow men—itself a way by the sons of the gentry to expiate the sins of their ancestors—that has made so many Chinese writers write with what to the cooler and happier world outside is undue warmth of feeling, that has deprived them of their native sense of humour, that, finally, has given a note of protest to the best that has been written in China in the past thirty years. With a sardonic grace Lu Hsun has time and again tried to conceal this love, but his readers have not been deceived. The feeling of fellowship has been amply reciprocated. Lu Hsun loved to tell a little anecdote about two young students he met one afternoon at a book-store. They had mistaken him for the shop clerk and handed him the money for a book they had taken. It turned out to be a copy of his *Wild Grass*. The coins had been fished out from a shirt pocket next to the skin, and when they were put into Lu Hsun's hand, they were still warm with the warmth of the young man's body. This warmth was branded on Lu Hsun's conscience; when he wrote, he could not afford to be trivial or frivolous. He once confessed that he was a cow who had to turn the bitter grass he ate into milk. When milk gave out he offered his heart's blood. He wrote himself out, but among the ten thousand men who, in 1936, walked in his funeral procession, amid the hush that had for once descended on the heartless city of Shanghai, many had put warm coins on the counter to buy his books.

# THE AMERICAN POET IN RELATION TO SCIENCE

---

NORMAN PEARSON

If one had called this paper 'The American Poet and the Modern World', we should still be in very much the same position as when we discuss the problem of the American poet in relation to science. For we can hardly deny the fact that the world as we know it today is one whose physical reality has been defined by science. It has, one might guess, always been so. The poet, like anyone else who is honest about facts, must live in recognition of the physical world which surrounds him. He may go ultimately beyond it, but he must start from it. If he has a difference from other men it does not lie in his being one of a *race* apart. The role of recorder of the new vistas comes to any Balboa who can be articulate after standing silent in wonder upon a peak in Darien. It was science which gave us the free world of the Renaissance and the apparent dignity and freedom of man. It is science which seems to have taken them from us, as we look now in fear and trembling upon a new vista of knowledge.

It is with fear and trembling that we look out. Science with constant energy and exploration has provided us with a new topography of definitions. The world has not changed, but the description of it has widened and altered. The laws of Newton, the logic of Aristotle, and the geometry of Euclid no longer obtain except on the lowest level of familiarity. The world as we see it to-day through the mind's-eye of the scientist is no longer a familiar and substantive mechanics but a helter-skelter of electronics out of which we can extract only equations of infinite variables. The path towards a demonstrable truth has become a maze of formulae whose following is no longer even a sport of kings, or if of kings it is of a new sort. One can start hopefully with descriptive classifications, but one is led almost immediately into the mystery of functions. The search for the newest world has led into realms of space,

energy, and changing matter. Man can describe his search with words, but even words, which have been our reliable source for the communication of experience, have been affected by science and are no longer valid in the older referential sense to which we were accustomed. \*

At least one scientist has put the difficulty of communication bluntly, for more than his own profession. In a speech given in 1940, at the 200th anniversary of the founding of the University of Pennsylvania, Hermann Weyl, of the Institute for Advanced Study, had this to say about the present basis for communication:

Words are dangerous tools. Created for our everyday life they may have their good meanings under familiar limited circumstances, but Pete and the man in the street are inclined to extend them to wider spheres without bothering about whether they then still have a sure foothold in reality. We are witnesses of the disastrous effects of this witchcraft of words in the political sphere where all words have a much vaguer meaning, and human passion so often drowns the voice of reason. The scientist must thrust through the fog of abstract words to reach the concrete rock of reality.

This problem is not one for the scientist alone. Tripped up in fog on the concrete rock of physical reality, the poet can smash his head as thoroughly as the scientist can. Like political witches, the poet can become a fog-maker for others. The circumstances of the world are no longer familiar and limited. The poet has had to look upon a new physical reality and learn not to accept what has been thought about it simply because it has been thought. He has had to learn a new vocabulary and syntax for giving extension to his conclusions. Old definitions of physical reality have lost validity. Their reference was to something which no longer exists in the same terms.

Words strain,  
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,  
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,  
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,  
Will not stay still.

This was T. S. Eliot in 1936, in his poem 'Burnt Norton',

the first of the 'Four Quartets' where he has tried to present a harmony and inter-relationship for the world. It is interesting and relevant that he has recently been a Fellow at the same Institute for Advanced Study of which Hermann Weyl is a member. It is an indication of common ground.

A poet can begin a poem only with words. Eliot's attitude towards their instability was not an idiosyncracy. It was marked even more generally by the reasons for, and the effect of, Ogden and Richards' *The Meaning of Meaning* which first appeared in 1923, and, although of the profoundest effect on modern poetic practice as well as its interpretation, was written by one man trained in psychology and another initially brought up as a mathematician. In later editions its supplementary essays were not by poets but by Malinowski, a cultural anthropologist, and by Crookshank, a doctor. The modern American poet's concern with words, with his medium, has at the very outset of his creative activity been profoundly affected by scientific thought. It is not fashion which causes him so often to talk about them.

The basic influence of science on the modern American poet has not been merely a matter of bringing over into verse the terminology or the artifacts of science. This of course he has always done to some extent, though the pace of transmission has increased along with general elementary education in science itself. In American poetry this latter phase can be noted from the time of Whitman, with his

Hurrah for positive science! long live exact demonstration!

But Whitman was not basically interested in the abstract demonstrations of science, as he indicated in the scorn of his poem, 'When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer.' What was exact for him was in terms of practical achievements, for example in reference to science's development of the trans-continental railway, the Atlantic cable, and the engineering of the Suez canal, which could unite the world by conquering distance, and bring us on a Columbian passage to India. Or it could be done, as it was done in 1920, in terms of emotional response, as Miss Millay so popularly affirmed in

Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare.

This seems perhaps a step closer to thinking in the scientific language of mathematics, but the whole sonnet veers from science in being chiefly in the language of aesthetics, is based on out-moded propositions, and carries in its actual language nothing of scientific concept or discipline.

We can find more innate indications of the influence of science on modes of poetic thought as we retrace the poetic history of the last half-century. Certainly the most dominant personality in its first two decades was Ezra Pound, and its first group manifestation that of the Imagists. Theirs may seem, in intent, to have been poetry of pure distillation, as when H.D. describes heat or a pool, or when Pound pictures the scene 'In a Station of the Metro'. But if one runs through Pound's and the Imagists' precepts one can see something like an attempt at scientific precision without value judgments in the rendering of objects. 'Direct treatment of the "thing",' Pound says, 'whether subjective or objective.' 'An "Image" is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. I use the term "complex" rather in the technical sense employed by the newer psychologists, . . .' 'Use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something.'

Science was helping to point out and emphasize the natural object to the poet. Pound, by analogy, sounds like one of the seventeenth-century Fellows of the Royal Society in their successful efforts to remove embellishment from diction in order to arrive at the point of scientific accuracy of description. What these modern poets were after was, as Miss Marianne Moore described it in a definition of poetry, 'real toads in imaginary gardens,' presented by 'literalists of the imagination'. This, within limits, was a question of starting from the actual world. Its effect was to drive out of poetry the fantasy of Kubla Khan's Xanadu which the Romantic school had enjoyed, and to concentrate instead on a world which included a piece of glass in a hospital yard or a red wheelbarrow shining in the sun. It was by its very inclusiveness of data a denial of the validity of an anti-poetic which stated that some objects were suitable for poetry while others were not. The scientific attitude of modern man has on the one hand reduced all

material objects to a single level, or, if you prefer, raised all material objects upward together. Science has helped to teach, and the poets have demonstrated, that all objects have an equal validity as the immediate subject of poetry, because all objects are similarly parts of the phenomenal world. Science has not done this single-handed, but it has been a most effective agent and sponsor. The result on modern poetry has been a greater apparent realism.

But all this is on a lower level of realistic definition. Modern man is faced not only with the problem of tangible appearance but of intangible being. He may as yet comprehend little more than the mystery of the fourth dimension, but he can at least understand that time as a concept is no longer chronological in the older definition, but is without duration and a state in which all things are coexistent. 'In my beginning is my end,' Mr. Eliot said in another of the 'Four Quartets'; 'In the end is my beginning.' 'Keeping time,' in his world, is a matter of an endless dance of men as of colloids. Hart Crane in the second of his 'Voyages', written in 1925, expresses time somewhat differently, yet it is again scientific in the modern sense:

And yet this great wink of eternity,  
Of rimless floods, unfettered leewardings,

Archibald MacLeish, in 'You, Andrew Marvell' (written in 1926), gave a modern variation of time which had troubled the lover of a coy mistress three centuries before:

And here face down beneath the sun  
And here upon earth's noonward height  
To feel the always coming on  
The always rising of the night

In the passage which I have just quoted from MacLeish there is not only an attempt at a precise rendering of the scientific concept of 'time, space, curvature', but there is evidence of a new syntax or structural arrangement of his words. There is in the poem really no proper subject nor predicate, and there are no commas to break up a flow of data which passes endlessly through a constant present of time. The poem is at least in intent not simply a picture of what happens

but the happening itself. One way of reducing the dichotomy between words and the things which they represent has been to make the words themselves things, and the structure of a poem itself an object. MacLeish has expressed this aim elsewhere in the otherwise enigmatic, and frequently misunderstood, conclusion to his versified 'Art of Poetry' (written in 1924):

A poem should not mean  
But be

There is no period to conclude either the poem or the statement of situation. It is motion and being. As the sculptor Gabo has said of his own medium: 'A work of art is not the representation of an idea, it is itself the idea.' This is again a twentieth-century kind of realism.

MacLeish's poem is the simplest example of the way by which the modern poet has tried affirmatively to present the physical world which science has defined. It is an attempt to accommodate the data, as the scientist has tried to accommodate them through another variety of language. Willard Gibbs, perhaps the greatest speculative mind of the nineteenth century in America, is said to have retorted in a faculty meeting which proposed the enhancement of modern languages over that of mathematics, 'But, gentlemen, mathematics is a language!' He is said to have walked out of the room. Miss Muriel Rukeyser has, in the February, 1949, issue of *Physics To-day*, paid him and an aspect of the modern science the tribute of a poet. 'Willard Gibbs,' she says,

is the type of the imagination at work in the world. His story is that of an opening-up which has had its effect on our lives and our thinking; and, it seems to me, it is the emblem of the naked imagination—which is called abstract and impractical, but whose discoveries can be used by anyone who is interested, in whatever 'field'—an imagination which for me, more than that of any other figure in American thought, any poet, or political, or religious figure, stands for imagination at its essential points.

It is because he dealt in law and in relationships that one may come to him from any point of interest, however inadequate one's background be. I came to him through poetry, without any of the

proper training, feeling that in this time, full of its silence in spite of the weight of paper and the weight of words poured on us every day, full of its barriers set up between the peoples of the world and any two people—in this time, our sources are to be reached. It seems to me that if we are in any way free, we are also free in relation to the past, and that we may to some extent choose our tradition.

Miss Rukeyser did not walk out on the language of the pure mathematician, realizing that she and he, in whatever differing ways, were in search of the concrete rock of reality. This is how she describes Gibbs in a poem:

Laws are the gifts of their systems, and the man  
 in constant tension of experience drives  
 moments of coexistence into light.  
 It is the constitution of matter I must touch.  
 Deduction from deduction: entropy,  
 heat flowing down a gradient of nature,  
 perpetual glacier driving down the side  
 of the unknown world in an equilibrium tending  
 to uniformity, the single dream.

He binds  
 himself to know the public life of systems.  
 Look through the wounds of law  
 at the composite face of the world.

The recent history of American poetry shows, however, that the poet's way has not been the scientist's way, though both have had by necessity to accommodate similar data. There has been a sharp distinction between the poet and the scientist in terms not only of the differentiated areas of reality which, in their professional capacities, they have tried to encompass in their descriptions, but also in their very concepts of the nature of knowledge, and in the procedures by which they attempt to attain it. The scientist has, if we may generalize, been concerned exclusively with physical reality and with consistent conclusions which can be empirically demonstrated. He is, in his role of scientist, concerned only with description, classification, and abstraction, and not with values. He has conceived knowledge as being confined within these limits. At least, in his professed technology he advances only inductively and

rationally. Science is at bottom always concerned with quantitative, measurable things. Anything for which no yard-stick is available is under suspicion by the scientist.

The poet, on the other hand, having used the yard stick, will drop it to go beyond physics into metaphysics. He has accepted a reality of the senses and of religious and ethical belief. To physical reality he has added a reality of the imagination. He has used physical data, but in reaching his conclusions has jumped ahead of his data on an essentially undemonstrable and sometimes inconsistent procedure of intuition based on an economy of the senses. It is, of course, true that the pure mathematician, in practice, himself uses intuition and jumps ahead of his data to a theorem to whose empirical substantiation he is indifferent. It is for this reason that the imaginative world of the pure mathematician, with his self-consistent and 'elegant' abstractions, lies close to the imaginative world of the poet. His equations are metaphors. But in this very procedure, the pure mathematician parts company from the mathematical physicist who, as typical of the scientist, insists on empirical testing. Science has its separate path. Scientific pride is in rational induction.

This difference in kinds of reality and in methodology is what chiefly has distinguished the poet from the scientist, and is the basis of a conflict characteristic of our time. Wallace Stevens has said, in a speech before the English Institute in the autumn of 1948: 'As for the present, what have we, if we do not have science, except the imagination. And who is to say of its deliberate fictions arising out of the contemporary mind that they are not forerunners of some such science.' The poet has relied on the imagination as an ultimate goal, and on intuition as a procedure for arriving there. Scientific confirmations of the fictions of the imagination may be determined by science. The poet, however, will, like the pure mathematician, be indifferent to the period of scientific proof required, if indeed scientific procedure can ever penetrate beyond the bounds of physical reality into the broader sphere in which the poet also plays. Physical reality endures, but only as partial reality. This ambivalence of physical reality with the area of the imagination is what so vitally modified Miss Moore's

description of poetry as 'real toads in imaginary gardens' and the poet as a 'literalist of the imagination'. The proper stresses fall on both 'real' and 'imaginary', on both 'literalist' and 'imagination'. The poet's skill comes into play in his representation of scientific knowledge; his daring, as he penetrates into the imagination.

If the poet in response to the scientific destruction of the idea of a mechanical universe has filled the apparent void by a procedural logic, he has done so with a new logic of the senses, in which coherence in chaos is obtained by the cohesive force of the imagination itself. When Hart Crane writes:

There is the world dimensional for  
those untwisted by the love of things  
irreconcilable . . .

he is counting on an ecstasy of the senses to reform and rebuild. When he writes, in 'Voyages II':

And onward, as bells off San Salvador  
Salute the crocus lustres of the stars,  
In these poinsettia meadows of her tides,—  
Adagios of islands, O my Prodigal,  
Complete the dark confessions her veins spell.

one must know the modern scientific definition of the physical reality which he describes, but one must also be able, as he suggests, 'to go *through* the combined materials of the poem,' by a path he defines as a 'logic of the metaphor', into a coherent metaphysical reality. Because the poem 'is', in MacLeish's sense, it impinges directly on the senses of the reader and becomes a stimulus to knowledge.

The modern poet not only by the example of tradition but by the very compulsion of a desire to know things has amplified the way of the scientist. The scientist goes by the procedure of postulative data; that is, the situation in which the complete meaning is known to be true only through precise logical and scientific description. Thus, water becomes  $H_2O$ ; and a pond is  $H_2O$  with an index of refraction, and having a bottom composed of precisely named minerals with a certain weight per specific volume.

The poet's way of knowledge has been through concept by intuition. He knows that water in the form of rain is different from that in the form of a flood; and no knowledge derived simply from a scientific description of reality will either quench thirst or save from demonstrable destruction. Therefore it has been his way to evoke the proper image and to learn from the image. If science took from the poet of our century a complete reliance on the individual meaning of words, the loss only served to emphasize to the poet the vital importance and validity of the structured image. H.D. and Pound were reacting to the impact of science in the precision of their descriptions, but they were doing it in the way characteristic of poets. This is, it seems to me, what a man like Robert Frost meant when he said that 'Metaphor is the whole of thinking'. He was talking about the poet's way to the imagination, and the kind of knowledge which the poet desired.

So also with the importance, during this period, of the use of myth in poetry-making. Myth may, at least with some validity, be said to be a dramatic extension of metaphor. The poet in his myth-making has taken over the data of the anthropologist and the researches of men like Frobenius, Grimm, Rhys, and Frazer. He has combined them into a common present of time, so that they impinge on us with present-ness. But the justification and usefulness of an anthropological myth, as Eliot and Crane have employed it, is to be found in an innate common denominator arrived at in terms of the senses. It is a new definition of common sense.

In the hands of certain modern poets this conflict between science and poetry as ways to knowledge, or between procedures based on reason and on intuition, has led to an overt anti-intellectualism. We can find this in the poetry of a man like E. E. Cummings, who is quite aware of the fact that although the typographical arrangement of his poems is physically realistic, and to that degree 'scientific', its impact and appeal is to the senses.

since feeling is first  
who pays any attention  
to the syntax of things  
will never wholly kiss you;

Cummings uses 'syntax' pejoratively in the old fashion. He has constructed a new syntax, however, and pays attention to it. He has been influenced by scientific thought; but 'feeling is first' for him as for most poets of the twentieth century. Eliot's way towards a metaphysics, though by the weight of his erudition it may seem an intellectual one, is, in his final period of waiting for illumination, intuitive and romantic. Physical reality has been taken into account, and tradition and the individual talent explained in terms influenced by modern science. But 'after such knowledge, what forgiveness?' The fulfilling knowledge of ultimate reality will come

At the source of the longest river  
 The voice of the hidden waterfall  
 And the children in the apple-tree  
 Not known, because not looked for  
 But heard, half-heard, in the stillness  
 Between two waves of the sea.

Eliot's sea flows beyond the scientific reality of  $H_2O$  in which various mineral salts are dissolved. So, too, Hart Crane, having voyaged through the plains of his sea, found knowledge not in the consolation of a physical constitution of Belle Isle, but

The imaged Word, it is, that holds  
 Hushed willows anchored in its glow  
 It is the unbetrayable reply  
 Whose accent no farewell can know.

The poet, looking at the tendency of science to limit itself to knowledge derived from physical reality alone, has started from there; if he has been satisfied with it, it has been only for the moment and he has gone beyond into a broadened area, to say with Wallace Stevens, in his poem 'To One of Fictive Music' (1923):

Unreal, give back to us what once you gave:  
 The imagination that we spurned and crave.

This is an address to 'unreality' only in the narrowest definition. Once regained, it is real enough.

Science has performed an inestimable service to modern poets in forcing them by a redefinition of physical reality, to search out a revitalized manner of expression. The poetic diction and syntax of the past was worn-out and exhausted. Science gave in those terms to poets a fresh beginning. But science itself stopped short, and was content with a limited view of reality confined to the empirical level only. It developed a technology which became a comforting ritual for observance, and endowed its own name with talismanic powers. Almost paradoxically it has become for the general run of man a pseudo-spiritual act of self-abnegation to creep into the tent of scientific procedure and knowledge, a place of substance but without values. The complexities and areas of technique and interlocking data have grown so great that the personality of the individual scientist has been lost to sight. The mathematical physicist has disappeared into his equation.

In a world which is unwilling to correlate the ways to knowledge of the scientist and poet, of reason and the imagination, the whole man has been lost by division. Personality is being erased as the area of reality is being reduced. But if we look at the psychological history of twentieth-century America, it has been the poet who, acting on the concept of intuition, still penetrating the mystery of both the physical and metaphysical as they affect himself as man, has made the strongest public stand for the dignity and freedom of the individual. He has been the preserver of the Renaissance heritage. In his concept of total reality he has accepted what science has taught about this newest of new worlds, but in presenting it in a work of art he has encompassed an even wider sphere. It is at least possible that the American poet of the first half of the twentieth century may be the complete realist, though not necessarily the complete mirror of the temper of our age.

# THE FLATMAN LETTERS

---

ELIZABETH WALSH

EVERYONE interested in seventeenth-century miniatures knows the name of Thomas Flatman; but to understand something of his complex character it is necessary to read his correspondence with his great friend, Charles Beale, the colour-maker, and the husband of Mary Beale, the artist.

Seven of these letters are preserved in the Bodleian Library, and like all other intimate correspondence, give an excellent picture of Flatman as he must have appeared to his contemporaries.

The son of a 'Clerk in Chancery', he was born in Aldersgate Street, London, in 1635. Educated at Wykeham's School, Winchester, he was elected a Fellow of New College, Oxford, in 1654, but left the University without taking his degree, to become a Barrister of the Inner Temple.

Inevitably the Law had but small appeal to a man of Flatman's temperament, and he gave most of his time to painting miniatures and writing, and an epigram of the period sums up his three occupations neatly.

'Should Flatman for his client strain the laws  
The Painter gives some colour to the cause;  
Should critics censure what the Poet writ,  
The Pleader quits him at the Bar of Wit.'

Whatever work Flatman did was governed by his moods. He likens himself to a barometer liable to swing from 'Set Fair' to 'Stormy' in a matter of moments. This rather uncomfortable characteristic is plainly shown in his 'Self-Portrait' of 1672, and is also reflected in his gay rollicking songs and long odes on death which were so popular with the public of his day, who considered him a writer rather than a limner.

How these fluctuating moods dominated his personal relationships can be seen by glancing at the seven letters mentioned earlier.

The last letter in the collection should be read first, for although it is undated, it can be classified under the year 1664-5, as it is addressed to the Beale's house, Hind Court, Fleet Street, and contains messages to his other great friend, Samuel Woodforde, who is known to have been living with the Beales at that time.

This letter was delivered with a box in which reposed a 'Kardor-Kardor—in plain English a 'Good Cake'. It was obviously written in one of his 'Set Fair' moods. It reminds the Beales and Woodforde of an incident at St. Bartholomew's Fair, and tells an amusing story about a dairymaid being chased by a bull. There is also an interesting reference to Mary Beale.

'Pray present my humble serviceable respects to my Valentine, my Scholar, and her mother.'

Although Flatman calls Mary his 'Valentine' several times, the allusion to her as his 'Scholar' occurs in every letter except one, and suggests that, contrary to the accepted opinion, she was at one time his pupil, as well as Robert Walker's.

The first dated letter is addressed to Charles Beale's house Aldbrook, near Winchester, to which he had fled with his family to escape the Plague in June, 1665. It is written from 'The Ruins of London, Dec. 13th, '66', and tells its own story.

'In doing what you have done, Sir, you show yourself rather a Father than a Master, and have outfriended all that part of the world which would ever have persuaded me they loved me. In a word, Sir, whatever superstructure Providence shall enable me to raise it must find itself raised on your foundations . . . Sir, you have given me myself again, a present which the greatest monarch cannot give.'

Flatman's gratitude for the help given to him by Charles Beale after he'd lost everything in the Great Fire is sincere enough, but it is characteristic that overwhelmed by his own troubles he does not mention the Beale's loss of Hind Court, which was to keep them out of London for many years.

There is a second letter 'from the Ruins of London', dated 9th January, 1666-7. In it Flatman is very depressed. He excuses himself from writing the week before, having been

'pestered with chilblains', and the list of mutual friends who have died in the Plague, including 'Mr. Bower, the famous Painter at Temple Bar', make dismal reading.

The next two letters in the collection are dated 1668, and deal entirely with gossip about friends, showing Flatman to be diligent in collecting news for the exiles in Hampshire: but the third letter of this period is of interest because it is the only one to mention Charles Beale's work as a colour-maker.

'Give me leave to begg a favour from you which yet is no more than you did of your generosity promise me, and that is as much as you can conveniently spare of your best white, prepared as formerly, if you haven't any boiled, I would willingly next week prepare a whole set of colours in lumps as I used to do, the old stock being almost exhausted.'

This letter may be said to represent 'Changeable' in his personal barometer, for after writing quite cheerfully on ordinary subjects, Flatman veers to an ever-reoccurring theme in one of his last sentences. 'I cannot think. I at present being much out of humour . . . I hope I shall not always be unhappy.'

The fifth letter is dated 1672, and is addressed to Charles Beale at 'The House next door to The Golden Ball, in Pall Mall'. Flatman appears to have made a sudden journey to Brome, Norfolk, from where the letter is written, and although only a brief note explaining his absence, it gives an interesting picture of Norfolk at that time.

'The country affords nothing new or divertive, but principally because all the great towns hereabouts are thronged with Scotch soldiery, who do, and demand what they please. The designe of which administers much discourse and dissatisfaction.'

The sixth letter, however, is the most extraordinary epistle, it is undated, and in the top left hand corner is written: 'Master I beseech you, by all the endearments of friendship in the world, you communicate nothing of my determinations to any person living but your worthy self and my Valentine.'

Flatman's 'determinations' were nothing less than his plan to commit suicide by drowning. His motives seem to have been some domestic trouble, and despair at 'my own folly and

inability to show myself and the world reasonable expectations of me'. To these he adds his debts of £50, seventeen of which he owed Charles Beale.

This letter shows us the Flatman of the 'Self-Portrait' and the poems and odes on death, and reveals how difficult a friend he must have been when his 'barometer' fell to 'stormy'. Yet remembering that former sentence—'I hope I shall not always be unhappy'—one cannot help feeling some pity for him.

The letter, with its morbid preoccupation with death is too long to quote in full, but the ending is the most interesting and important part.

'O (My dear Master) Necessity and Religion have had a terrible combat within my breast, so (with horror be it spoken) the last I fear will be vanquished; what a trifle it is that keeps me from being immortal, from being out of ye reach of a vexatious world, 'tis but a little life! Poor irksome thing! Very short at longest, yet so very tedious though n'ere so short . . . Well, Master, the Dy is thrown. If (after our meeting on Monday morning) you never see me more, pitty me and forget me. You have my firm unmoveable intentments, for I have no friend that can quiet my troubled mind, or will release me when I am in hold. Shame is more than Death. This is all: Happiness attend you and yours whatever becomes of me, dear Master.'

Knowing how unbalanced Flatman was, it is very difficult to decide if this letter was more than a means of rousing Charles Beale's pity in order that he should cancel the debt of £17. Yet Flatman's general outlook on life, as revealed in his letters, and by the comments of his friends, might easily have led him to insanity and suicide, so it is just possible that this is a genuine last letter.

If this is so, and Flatman did commit suicide, though not by drowning, it may explain that curiously worded sentence referring to his death in Wood's *Athenea Oxonienses*.

'At length, he having lived to the age of fifty-three or thereabouts, he gave way to fate in his house in Fleet Street, London, on the 8th day of December, sixteen hundred and eighty-eight.'

Even if this letter is unconnected with Flatman's death, it still remains the one which gives us the deepest insight into his complex character, and since the only other undated letter undoubtedly belongs to the year 1664-5, it very suitably becomes the last of the Flatman letters in the Bodley collection.

## ON SEEAN A PICTURE O JOHANN CHRISTIAN FISCHER IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, EMBRO

by MAURICE LINDSAY

Johann Christian Fischer? Mm—the face is kindly,  
the wig weil-snod, the features firmly set,  
as leanan on a harpsichord by Albrecht,  
wi quill in hafn you scrieve a menuet.

The feet sae carefully crossed tae shaw the buckl't shuin,  
gimp hose an curly cravat o white lace,  
the fiddle on the chair, the music heaped—  
the haill a glisk o 18th Century grace!

Gin ony o your stately airs an tunefu dances  
that kittlit pouder't duchesses lang syne,  
culd tinkle oot o Albrecht's yalla keyboard,  
maist folk'ud look at you a second time.

But aa is dusty silence, lik the derk ahint you,  
an e'en your notes are naethin but a blur:  
the backgrund fu o shaddaws, seems tae draw you  
tae hap you in its aa-embracan slur.

Yet there you staun oot still, by Gainsborough made  
immortal,  
as gin sic fame was shairly jist your due—  
a perfect shell upon the shore left strandit,  
a thing for antiquarians tae view!

## THE ORPHAN

by NORMAN NICHOLSON

Here in a cot of earth I stand—  
 Earth rails me in on every hand—  
 Walls of sandstone, walls of slate,  
 Through which I see as through a gate  
 The slats of fellside, taut and tall,  
 That gave the stone to build them all.  
 Backyards are lying, side by side,  
 For the sun to open wide,  
 Lifting the lids of shade until  
 Pigs of daylight flood and fill  
 Every gulley, hutch, and hole,  
 Like molten iron tipped to cool.  
 The children's washing on the line,  
 Bubbly with buttons, starched with shine,  
 Tethered or tied by arm or leg,  
 Fights to be free of pin and peg.  
 Kitchen chimneys, cowl and flue,  
 Raise bars of brick against the blue,  
 And a tight mesh of wood and wire  
 Nets my sight from stretching higher  
 Than where the smoke from breakfast grates  
 Blooms like a currant-bush, and waits  
 Till the wind flicks and flakes the leaves  
 And shakes the pollen on the eaves.

Earth my mother, earth my mould;  
 Earth the shop in which I'm sold,  
 Priced at the pennorth of bronze ore  
 That's all the wealth my bones can store.  
 Stone and iron, wood and clay,  
 Block my eyes from light of day,  
 As if the bracken-blinkered earth  
 Grudged the gaze she brought to birth.  
 Leather- or wooden-clogged, my feet  
 Limp up the same material street,

Where heart of tree and ore of rock,  
 Gutter and gable, stone and stock,  
 Overhang like a dark cave—  
 The vast interior of the grave.

But the wind still can meet me here—  
 Beyond the marsh, beyond the pier,  
 The furnace stewing in its steam,  
 The tannery by the brackish stream,  
 The empty ratholes of the mines,  
 The rusted hoops of railway lines,  
 Beyond the hills of men and moles,  
 The wind blows in from the two Poles.  
 See how the glass of the town clock  
 Gleams like an iceberg ; see the rock  
 Of wall and roof resume again  
 The slither of a slow moraine—  
 Till on the glacier of the wind  
 I skate free from the weathered land,  
 And watch air's frosty thumb-nails probe  
 The crooks and crannies of the globe,  
 Sculpting and shaping, that each place  
 Wear the cut of its father's face;  
 Watch a tailor's iron of rain  
 Smooth out the crinkles in the plain,  
 And hear the rasping files of hail  
 Grate down the rock to sand and shale.  
 And now I straddle dodd and dip  
 Like slack wires on a collier tip—  
 Royalty-rights in sky and shore:  
 Solid as earth and free as air.

But, look! the earth is whipped to dust,  
 The rock is cracked like pastry-crust,  
 And every thimbleful of sand  
 Fractured and fissured into wind.  
 Frantic azaleas of flame  
 Burst from each speck of flint or foam;

Mountains simmer, and seas boil dry,  
And suns volatilise the sky.  
Oh what's become of air and earth,  
Father and mother, lung and mouth,  
The elements that gave me breath  
Or spoke a negative to death?  
What parents can I call my own,  
When air is fire and earth is bone?

## PROMETHEUS GOD OF THE ATOM

*The Ultimate Source of Power; The Crown of Human Achievement.—  
Newspaper Report.*

by PETER HELLINGS

Fear the profound flash.  
Eyelids glow red. Eardrums a soundless crash  
Reverberate. Here no god is dead  
But a god suffers: listen afresh:

Here whines a shrill sweet wind  
Above that thunder day's blue drum drives back.  
Soils melt and seas fused solid scream asunder  
Bloodred and black; light unimagined

Shrieks in earth's orgasms  
And death spasms of instantaneous birth  
Annihilation's torn from. Here gape chasms  
Of chaos. Yet here no god is born

But a god suffers.  
Fires  
At his four stations flaunt, birdlike desires,  
He is mocked by those terrified mechanical incantations  
Of man, falsified by those fears

Flame creates in the face  
 Nobility in reverse, gargoyle of grace;  
 And no man swears the justice of that curse  
 Or dreams it can leave no trace.

Here groans Prometheus, dread  
 Fire-wracked Prometheus, magnanimous godhead  
 Who out of folly filched from the hall of Zeus  
 Fire, and brought it down for the dead.

Agonies light those eyes  
 Abandoned among the inventions of disguise  
 Where no man sings but song's own withering tongue  
 Flays, and a flamelike vulture flies,

Fattening on fleshly fuel,  
 And each man's masterpiece twists like a jewel  
~~Car~~bonized in raw wounds where crystal ice  
 Like blood, glitters at each renewal

Of fire-borne frenzy.

Earth

Rocks winds rise in repulsive birth  
 Shocks or mirth tremors where dim wrecks of skies  
 Tilt to the staggering horizon's girth.

Look, look up at that tower  
 Of mile-high flowering cloud. There bowed men cower  
 Upon the bare ground, terrified and proud  
 In genius and demoniac power.

And we, the once-dead, preferred  
 To wonder with that fire informing the word,  
 We are those bound who heard, rain after thunder  
 Release, the profound flash of the bird.

Here dreams Prometheus, profound  
 Fire-proud Prometheus. All light glows black, like sound  
 Dropped into silence. All that we touch can destroy us.  
 Christ-wise, the god has been crowned.

# THE MESSAGE IN THE BOTTLE

---

MARY JACKSON

I COULDN'T keep my mind on Miss Christopher's grammar lesson at all. Every time I tried to hook my thoughts on to the transitive and intransitive verbs they slipped off again. When the girl at the next desk pushed a note in front of me which read: 'Take took taken, bake book bacon,' I couldn't even smile; I was thinking so intensely of my twin brother Alfred, out on Marazion beach.

'The fool,' I was thinking, 'the silly little fool, the ~~ass~~, the idiot.' The thoughts came so violently that I imagined everyone in the classroom must know. I couldn't even be sure I hadn't spoken something aloud.

Yet Miss Christopher droned on and on, a hornet hovering over the transitive and intransitive verbs, getting nowhere, settling nothing; and the girls were mostly yawning, or doodling on their blotting paper, or writing notes to each other.

The notes travelled around the classroom by an intricate secret system. They travelled along the water pipe inside a tennis ball with a flap cut in the side, hidden from the teacher's view by the row of desks along the wall; or they were passed across the front desks inside a large scooped-out indiarubber. When one method of passing notes was discovered, another was invented.

'Alfred,' my mind went on, 'you've asked for it. Straight into the trap you go. You've done it this time. Oh Alfred!'

I wanted desperately to help him, but what could I do? Let him know what was about to happen to him? Warn him?

At that moment the break-bell rang. Miss Christopher swept her chalkings off the blackboard, and the girls closed their books. Everyone began to talk and we turned into the playground. Presently the caretaker came out with the glasses of milk on a tray. This, I thought, was the moment, the last chance I should have.

As the others formed into little groups and collected around the tray which had been laid on the bench under the window, I slipped behind the yew hedge. From there it was easy and I was soon out in the road. I had only been on the way for some minutes when a jingle came rattling by with a man from Marazion.

'Hey Mister!' I called. 'Can you give me a lift?'

'Jump in, jump in,' the man said. 'Get along there,' and the pony stopped, started, and broke into a trot.

'Your father's you want, is it?' the man asked.

'Oh no, I'll get down before that, by the beach, just after the station,' I said.

It was a wonderful bright warm December morning. We passed a violet field and the smell from the flowers twirled across the road in front of our noses. The clopping of the pony's hooves, the steady movement of the jingle, and the decision I had taken to warn Alfred became an anodyne to my troubled thoughts. The hills rose behind us, and the farms on the slopes lay around us, and beyond that the sea stretched, blue like the sky, the whole of Mount's Bay a map; and the Mount rose out of the water with the ancient monastery on the top sucked up into the sky.

As we came into the Penzance-Marazion road and neared the beach I saw the carts drawn up and loaded with seaweed to be spread over the fields. We rounded the bend at the station. A tarpaulin with the words 'Flower Traffic Only' hung from the roof, and the platform was piled with boxes of anemones and violets.

Then the sea was on our right, and the inland pool where the swans and gulls floated on our left.

'Is it true,' I asked the man beside me, 'that gulls weigh only five ounces?'

'About that I reckon,' he said. 'Light as anything. Shall I put you down here?'

I stepped out by the gap in the wall, walked across the grass which gradually gave way to sand, and continued along the beach towards Marazion.

Then I saw him, a black spot in the distance. I saw Alfred. I pulled out my two handkerchiefs and signed to him in

Semaphore to come over. He replied by putting his fingers to his mouth and making the red-Indian noise. He started back across the track from the Mount.

What was he doing there anyway? Even as a black spot in the distance I could see he was swaggering as he came. Some imaginary triumph possessed him. How annoying he was! My irritation returned. He approached slowly, taking his time.

'Alfred,' I began as he came near, but he forestalled me.

'So you've missed school too have you?' he called. 'Goodo! I've just heard a smuggler talking in Spanish, and now I'm on the track of something very interesting. If you don't make a nuisance of yourself I'll let you in on it.'

'Alfred,' I said. 'I want to talk to you seriously.'

'Oh no Fanny, not now,' he intervened. 'This is wonderfully interesting, a real adventure.'

'Real?' I sniffed. 'I'll bet it isn't. The things you—never are real. But I'll tell you something real. They're going to send you to a new school, a special kind of school this time.'

'No! Not another school? Not again. Oh no. They wouldn't do that. I've had enough schools. I'm sick of schools. What d'you mean, a special kind of school?'

He looked at me in disgust, then horror, then suspicion as if it were my fault.

'It's true,' I said. 'I heard them talking after we'd gone to bed last night. I was hungry and couldn't sleep, so I went downstairs to get myself an apple. The door was open as I passed and I saw them looking at a leaflet, and heard them read out a piece about the school, and the treatment for children who are—subnormal.'

'Who are what? Me?' Alfred was profoundly shocked. 'That's what they think I am? Subnormal? Why, it's—it's an insult, a rotten insult.'

'Oh, I know how you feel,' I said. 'But in a way it's your own fault that people think that. You see you do imagine all kinds of things that aren't true.'

'I don't,' he snapped.

'But you do Alfred.'

'I do not.'

‘And you make things up.’

‘I do not. I never make things up. And I’m not subnormal. I’m more than normal. I know more than other people. I know more history than the master at school anyway.’

‘Alfred, that’s a fib.’

‘It’s the truth. I could tell him historical things about St. Michael’s Mount. I’ve seen happen myself.’

‘What sort of things?’

‘Oh when the ships came over from France. I’ve heard the Prior talking to the monks about the ships. And I’ve seen them. The sort they used to have I mean.’

‘You know perfectly well there haven’t been any priors or monks there for generations and generations and generations, in fact for hundreds of years,’ I said angrily. ‘So you can’t have.’

‘Sometimes,’ Alfred asseverated, ‘I can see the past. That’s because I’m the seventh son of a seventh son.’

‘Rubbish,’ I snapped. ‘And anyway, if that meant anything I should be the same as I’m your twin.’

‘That’s different, you’re a girl.’

‘Why is it different?’

‘You can’t see the past. That’s the difference.’

‘Neither can you,’ I said. ‘You make it all up just for swank, and look where it’s leading you now!’

‘All right,’ Alfred went on determinedly, ‘Well what about the skating rink at Penzance?’

As I remembered that horrible afternoon a shiver ran down my back. It had been a cold bleak day, with the mist blowing in from the sea. We were walking along the promenade towards Newlyn when a horse-drawn vehicle of some kind pulled up at the other side of the road. I couldn’t see for the mist but Alfred ran across the road to look. It started off and he didn’t return immediately. I leaned against the rails at the edge of the promenade and listened to the sea. When Alfred came back his eyes were bright.

‘What d’you think?’ he said excitedly. ‘The people in the carriage have gone skating. They’d all got skates. The new rink has opened you know. It’s called the Serpentine. It’s enormous. I heard them talking about it. If you buy from

three to five admission and skating tickets at Mr. Rodda's, you can be collected by cab at your house and taken free to the rink. Horse cabs they are, old fashioned but fun. The rink is open in the mornings, again in the afternoons, and from half past seven to a quarter to ten at night. Oh, please let's go to Mr. Rodda's and get some tickets now, this minute, come on Fanny.'

I remembered it so well, how he pulled me across the promenade. But there was no skating rink. Nobody in Penzance knew anything about a skating rink. There had been no plans for building a skating rink. It hadn't even been thought of.

'We'll go ask Mr. Rodda,' Alfred suggested hopefully.

'All right,' I agreed. 'But who is he anyway? Where do we find him?'

'I—I don't know,' Alfred hesitated. He suddenly became very depressed. 'I don't know at all.' He began ~~to cry~~, After these imaginary events Alfred always behaved in the same way, first becoming confused, then depressed, then beginning to cry.

'I know,' I said brightly to cheer him up, 'let's walk along the shore to Newlyn and see if we can find anything on the beech.'

We strolled along the pebbles picking up a few shells and some pieces of cork and some white dried cuttlefish for the canary. As we reached Newlyn the mist was beginning to clear.

'Why that's funny,' Alfred said. 'They haven't built the new pier yet. The boats are still up in the old harbour. I hadn't noticed that before.'

'For Heaven's sake Alfred, stop it!' I cried. 'The new pier is older than father. It's there, straight ahead. You can't see the old harbour. Nobody could from here unless the new pier were transparent which it isn't. You're being silly. Only crazy people make remarks like that, so shut up!'

Alfred was silent all the way home. I was miserable. I had hurt his feelings and I was sorry. After all he was my twin.

That evening, at home, grandfather was showing the boys how to make an eye splice in a piece of hemp rope when Alfred suddenly said :

'Grandda, was there ever a skating rink in Penzance?'

'A skating rink?' Grandfather repeated. 'There certainly was my boy. A very fine one too. When I was your age I used to skate there. The Serpentine, it was called. We used to buy books of tickets for all the family at the stationer's, and a cab called at the house for the ladies.'

We all looked at our grandfather with surprise. It was difficult to believe more things had been going on when he was young, than now.

'Grandda,' Alfred persisted. 'What was the name of the stationer where you bought the tickets?'

'His name? Oh, I don't know. I forget now. Rodda perhaps, Yes, Rodda I believe it was. Now you tuck this strand over the top strand and under the next strand, turn the work over, and tuck this one under that. Now do you see?' I remembered avoiding Alfred's eyes.

'Oh, come on Fanny, don't look so glum,' he was saying now as he flung a pebble at me. 'I'll let you into a secret. I'm waiting for a message in a bottle. I've been expecting it for several days but this tide should bring it in.'

He screwed up his eyes and looked into the distance, then he leapt up, let out a yell and chased across the beach to the rim of the sea. I followed him. Beyond the line of the waves a bottle was bobbing up and down in the water.

'That's it, that's the bottle,' Alfred cried excitedly. 'Now we shall know what's been going on. Oh, but it's exciting.' He hopped about, up and down in the sea, without troubling to take off his shoes.

I sat down on the sand. In a few minutes the bottle was ashore and Alfred breaking its neck with a large round stone. There was, as he expected, a message in the bottle. He took it out, a dry yellow piece of stiff paper covered with fine handwriting. Alfred scrutinized it carefully, then looked up. Surprisingly, his eyes were now filled with tears. 'The poor chap,' he said. 'I'm afraid we're going to be too late.' He handed me the paper.

I read: 'Barque Nicolea, of Buenos Ayres, bound to Buenos Ayres, Scilly Islands bearing E.S.E. 70 miles. Strong gales

S.W. with heavy rain, vessel making much water, rolling very heavy. W. Dixon, master, December 16th 1881.'

'It's that Mr. Plain's fault,' Alfred said angrily. 'I know it is. The rotten trick he played. And he knew the boat was going all that way. If we could only . . . but what's the use. There might be a chance though, it's still December.'

'Whatever are you talking about?' I said. 'It's still December, but it isn't December 1881.'

'Oh no, of course not, I'd forgotten.' Alfred rubbed his eyes. 'It must be all over now. But still, still I feel something might be done. I think there will be another message. I'd like to try Praa Sands. Let's go to Praa Sands.'

I put the paper in my pocket and we stood up.

'No,' I said firmly. 'I'm going back to school. You can look for more messages if you like. But Alfred, I've warned you. Why don't you concentrate on the present instead of getting mixed up with the past? Why don't you make an effort to show them you don't need to go to a special school, that you're the same as everyone else really?'

'I'm afraid I can't do that,' Alfred said very simply, 'and I shan't go to any more schools.'

I walked across the sand and each time as I turned to look at him he was still there. Each time I turned he waved to me, and each time he got smaller until at last he was just a black speck.

Christmas came and went, birthdays came and went. We grew older. I left school. Miss Christopher retired. My brothers went to sea. The war came. The family scattered. The home was given up. Everything changed.

But last summer I returned to Penzance, and one hot afternoon as I was walking along the promenade looking for a place to bathe, I met Miss Christopher, now much aged and even drier than before. She recognized me and held out her hand.

'Why Fanny,' she said smiling. 'I'm so glad to meet you again. There's something I want to show you, something connected with your twin brother.'

She took me to the little house she lives in now, on the front facing the sea. We went into her study.

'You perhaps remember,' she said, taking a small piece of yellow paper from the bureau, 'the day you stayed away from school? The day your brother ran away? You remember giving me this?'

I looked at the paper. It was the message from the bottle. 'That must be about fifteen years ago,' I said.

'I know,' Miss Christopher went on, 'and since you left Cornwall a great deal has happened. I've retired from teaching as you may know, but lately I've been doing a large amount of research for a book we are compiling, a history of the district. I've collected numbers of old records and papers during recent years, and a few months ago I found something which I think will interest you. It's an old newspaper. Go through it carefully.' She handed it to me and went out, closing the door behind her.

I looked round the room. There were piles of books everywhere. Dull books. Fusty books. Old books. Books that smelt damp. I wondered why Miss Christopher, who was really so kind, seemed to take the life out of everything she touched.

I opened the old newspaper and read the name across the top. It was the Cornish Telegraph for Thursday, January 5th, 1882. The first page was covered with advertisements, sales by auction, public notices, trade addresses, and announcements. I glanced through these and read at random: 'Lost, a light coloured mare donkey, aged, short face and legs, tail cut off to stump. Finder will be rewarded.' Then there was: 'Penzance String Season Band. The above band is open to engagements for Concerts, Balls, Dance music, etc. The best and newest band out. Full' Band, Half Band, or otherwise. Apply to Herr Klee, Bandmaster, Penzance.'

There was an advertisement for Richard White, senior, who sold 'Pianofortes, Harmoniums, and American Organs,' and Grose and Company who solicited the favour of an inspection of Ladies' Swiss and Polish, laced, buttoned, and elastic sided double soled and cork clumped boots, or Gentlemen's Balmorals, elastic sides, Levant Seal and French Calf.

What was Miss Christopher getting at, I wondered. What could she mean me to read.

I saw an advertisement for Butter Powder. 'The old established and most reliable preparation for the purpose of removing all unpleasant flavour from butter, arising from wild garlic, leeks, sour grass, etc. Other advantages derived from the powder are that it materially shortens labour by bringing butter in a few minutes, and not only produces much more butter, but makes it very superior in quality, which at all times must command the best price in the market.' I turned the page.

Then I noticed a column with a short paragraph headed: 'Rainfall at Marazion', and another headed: 'News from the Sea.' I read: 'On Thursday afternoon a bottle was picked up on Marazion beach containing a written paper, of which the following is a copy:—Barque Nicolea, of Buenos Ayres, bound to Buenos Ayres, Scilly Islands bearing E.S.E. 70 miles. Strong gales S.W. with heavy rain, vessel making much water, rolling very heavy. W. Dixon, master, December 16th 1881.'

I compared this with the note in my hand. They were identical. Miss Christopher entered the room.

'Have you found it?' she asked.

'Yes. Extraordinary. I—I don't know what to think. I suppose the man must have sent off more than one copy of the message.'

'But you haven't seen the second one,' Miss Christopher said, leaning over my shoulder and pointing to a paragraph on a further page. I read:

'A Message from the Sea. The following was found written on a piece of paper in a bottle which was washed ashore on Praa Sands:—Blowing a terrific gale of wind S.W., fearful seas shipped, washing over fearfully. No free board: only scupperholes. Both lower topsails blown to pieces; ship hove to under mizen staysail; securing after-hatch; pumps constantly getting chocked. Plain, carpenter at Cardiff a bad man; may he repent as to his survey. If weather don't moderate bad job for vessel. W. J. Dixon, master, barque Nicolea, December 18th, 1881, 3 a.m.'

What had Alfred said? Surely something about a Mr. Plain, but I couldn't remember exactly. All I could remember

was Alfred's face with the tears on it. But Miss Christopher was talking to me.

'I beg your pardon,' I apologised for not hearing.

'I said,' Miss Christopher repeated, 'I have often wondered what happened to your brother. He's never mentioned in your family is he? But I thought perhaps you might have heard.'

'He disappeared that day,' I replied. 'Apparently he stowed away in a French crabber at Newlyn. He went to France, and then to Spain.'

I hesitated. His career was really rather inglorious. Could Miss Christopher take it? I decided she could.

I continued: 'He was adopted by a band of gipsies, and later performed in a circus as 'The Boy who can see the Past'. I've had one letter from him, written a year ago. He seems alternatively to have been a seaman and a partner to conjurers and magicians. He sent me a notice from a San Francisco theatre where he was billed as "The man who can read your Past", and another one which I couldn't understand; it was written in Japanese, from Tokyo. He lived with a troupe of jugglers in Tokyo for some years he said, learning the art of balance.'

'Eventually he went to the south Pacific and settled on some remote island. He wrote that he had at last found his spiritual home, and felt that he had returned to his own people. He had married a native woman, he said, and was blessed with an increasing family. The tribesmen held him in high esteem, and he certainly was not considered subnormal any more. He had never regretted running away from school and the corruptions of civilization. He ended the letter by hoping I should find as much happiness in my life as he had found in his.'

Miss Christopher regarded me in silence.

'You were always very different, you two, for twins, weren't you?' she said at last.

'Yes,' I replied. 'Very different.'

And suddenly I felt unaccountably irritable, anxious to forget the whole thing, and impatient to go bathing while the sun still shone.

# A WINDMILL AND TWELVE CHERRY TREES

---

CLEDWYN HUGHES

REES owned a windmill and twelve cherry trees. A man owning either of these things would have been a distinction in any village. His was the only windmill left in the county, and though now geared to make electricity, yet it was a wonder in the way it stole the wind and harnessed it to usefulness. And cherry trees do not grow in profusion in Lawnt parish; only one here and there among the hedge-rows, the blossom white in Springtime. These twelve trees formed an avenue up to the windmill of Rees. Six on either side of the high banked lane, here where primroses grew in great profusion.

And to see this romance came artists and visitors. Men with cameras and city people watching with open mouths the creaking sails. And small children came each year from all parts of the valley to eat the small, big-stoned cherries from off the twelve trees. For although Rees had turned the windmill to use, he had not bothered much about the fruit of the cherry trees. Each year he whitewashed the outside of his mill so that it was even more of a dazzling whiteness than the blossom of the trees.

Rees himself was an oddity. A tall man, and over the years he had cultivated a beard to fine smooth point. He had been born in Lawnt but he had been away long years in distant places. He had been a mate on some ship taking missionaries on their rounds of the islands of the South Seas. He had come back to his beginning again and had bought the old ruin of the windmill. He had taken out the great grey grinding stones and had fitted in dynamos and gears and gave the electricity free to all in the village.

Over the years of neglect a great copse had grown around the mill, so that none of the wind which funnelled through

the valley could reach it. Rees had cut down the trees and had left standing only the cherries; planted long ago by some miller who perhaps wanted the sight of an avenue from the windows of the small house by the mill bottom.

Not to all men in their retirement is it privileged to be given a windmill and a dozen cherry trees. And Rees was quite wonderful, too. Perhaps it was the years of voyaging with the missionaries which gave him his kindness and generosity. People had thought him at first a fool in the way he let children pick the cherries and in the way he gave electricity free. Yet with the years they understood that it was not some quaint foolishness but some goodness which made him do these things.

The stranger came with October and in much the same way as that month he was a man of sudden sunshine smiles and cold unloving blue eyes. He came on a bicycle to Lawnt and he must have travelled far, for his bicycle was dusty and there were fallen leaves caught up in the spokes of his bicycle. People who saw him in the village thought that he was some touring cyclist. But he went up the lane to the windmill. There the cherry leaves were starting to fall and once or twice the man stopped to brush away a sere leaf which had caught in the gay crown of his hat. Halfway along the lane he caught up with Robert the Batteries, he a lad who travelled out to all the farms with wireless batteries, and now bringing back exhausted ones to be charged inside the windmill.

This strange man talked and walked friendly with Robert, asking the lad was Mr. Rees at home?

‘Oh yes, he is almost certain to be at home.’

‘And is he contented, my boy?’

‘Very, sir.’

‘And what does he do with his hours?’

‘Reads and thinks mostly.’

Together they went up to the cottage door and Robert laid his pannier of batteries down.

‘Shall I knock and call him? I have a peculiar knock which he understands and can hear above the concentration of his reading.’

‘Thank you, lad.’

Robert the Batteries knocked three times hard and three times soft on the old fashioned knocker. Rees came to the door, a book in one hand.

It was the stranger who spoke first, lifting his hat slightly.

‘Mr. Rees?’

Rees closed his book and laid it behind him on a small table in the hallway.

‘That is so.’

‘I admire your avenue of trees, Mr. Rees. It must be wonderful in the Spring. And your windmill. I never knew that windmills were much in favour in a valley. I thought that they were for flat lands only?’

Rees pointed up to the height of the windmill, the sails reaching up to the blue October sky.

‘Wind comes from the mountains most days here. She is a beauty is my mill—’ he turned to Robert ‘—isn’t she, Robert?’

The lad nodded, too shy to talk among these older men.

The stranger spoke again.

‘You are very happy here, Mr. Rees?’

‘Very. But tell me, what can I do for you? Do you want to see the mill, or make a picture of the cherry trees?’

The man who came on the bicycle shook his head.

‘Oh no, I must be on my way. I am a solicitor, Mr. Rees.’

Robert, watching the men, could see that Rees knew the name.

‘Mr. Pugh?’

‘That’s right. You will have heard from me about your brother. We have cleared up the estate. I was going to write to you the day before yesterday when I left the office. But I was just starting my holiday and thought that I would call in and see you as I was passing this way.’

‘Is all done? He was buried decently?’

‘He was. He has left you his monies and in a codicil he directed that ten pounds be left to buy a hive of bees which I was to present to you. The swarm I have arranged to be delivered to you in the course of a few days.’

‘But what use have I for bees?’

'Better take them Mr. Rees, as a wish from the dead. They will be happy, I'm sure, here among the cherry trees.'

And so it was that next week Robert the Batteries helped Rees to carry a carefully packed hive of bees which had come in a special container to the railway station. They carried up the hive and set it on a small box to the one side of the windmill. That winter Rees read of the ways of bees and learned how to feed them with sugar and water. He came to love these bees and Robert, telling the tale in the village, set off gossip as to who this brother could be. There was only one great grandfather in the village, he the relation of Mrs. Welks who kept the village sweetshop. This old man's eyes were white as peppermints with cataract and his hands were shaking always as are the uneasy leaves of a poplar tree. But his memory was clear and sound and he was asked did he remember any brother to Mr. Rees the Windmill? And in his slow faltering way the old man had explained that there had been a brother who had gone away to become a tailor. He had been a chance-child and Rees's mother had bundled him away as if he had been conceived in hell.

The people were content then, only wondering why it was that a beehive had been the legacy? A strange, rather uneasy gift to be received from the dead.

The next Spring came and all could see how very happy Rees the Windmill was with his bees. He would sit for hours in the first of the summer sunshine watching the way they went in and out of the hive. And there was a whole hum among the blossom of the cherry trees, now.

Often Rees would put on his veil, tucking his beard neatly into it; and he would put on his gloves, also, and lift off the roof of the hive and watch all the activity inside. Each morning he would bend down to peep into the small sliding door of the hive to watch the way the bees landed briskly on the little stage, and crawled inside. In the hotter days he watched the way bees were stationed at the door of the hive threshing the air with their wings to give draught and ventilation. Sometimes bits of waste would be carried out and

dropped over the edge of the stage. Invading wasps were thrown out. And with the coming of full summer Rees began to think of all the little cells inside full with honey and capped with wax.

One day in late June the hive swarmed. A sudden great hum and moan as the surplus bees flew out with the vacating queen.

Rees was in the windmill adjusting the dials and the speed of the generators when he heard this noise, louder even than the whine of his small dynamo.

He stood at the top of the stone steps leading to the mill door. He was pleased that the sails were only moving slowly on this listless day. For he had been afraid that when the bees swarmed, that the speed and movement of the sails would send them far away to settle in some distant, unknown place.

But already the bees were landing.

And he could see that they were settling on one of the branches of a cherry tree, a great brown clump forming there.

He waited a little time and then went out and got ready a ladder, a saw, and a new clean hive. When the bees had become quieter he reared his ladder against the tree. After that he climbed carefully, sawing away the branch with the bees and carrying it to the ground.

The bees he shook on to a cloth covered platform set before the new empty hive. They marched in there and by nightfall they had all moved into their new home.

In the last cool hour of the day Rees the Windmill looked at his two hives. And he knew that with each summer they would increase.

But next morning looking through the bedroom window of the mill house an uneasiness came to him. With the cutting away of the branches the one cherry tree had lost its true shape and seemed odd and unequal. He was rather surprised, for it had only seemed a small branch that he had cut away. Yet the difference in the shape of the avenue was plainly to be seen from this height.

He went downstairs and looked along the line of the

avenue to the white gate at the end. From ground level all seemed even and correct.

That winter the mutilated cherry tree withered away. Its leaves fell quickly and sharply and no buds came the next Spring. And Rees, trying the bark with a pocket knife, found that there was no sap inside.

One dead cherry tree among an avenue of eleven. Perhaps he had become too used to his good fortune, or maybe his years on ship and sea had given him an acute sense of balance and design.

The dead cherry tree worried him. Eventually he cut it down and to gain equality he cut down the tree on the opposite side of the lane as well. People were surprised and became worried when Rees advertised cherry wood for sale. He had many buyers from the neighbouring villages but none of Lawnt people seemed eager to buy. They were worried that he whs had once given so much away was now charging for firewood. And there was another worry, too, for that year Rees put up a notice *Cultivated Cherries* and prevented any of the village lads from having their usual free fruit. Rees picked them himself and sold them to a store in the market town.

That summer his bees swarmed again on a blazing June day; no wind in the air and the swarm settled on the top, upright sail of the windmill.

Rees asked the boy Robert to clamber up the sails with a wooden box and a stick inside.

'Place the box over the swarm with the stick in the centre, Robert, and tie the box in place. With the sunset we will lower the sail and hive the bees. You are not afraid of the height?'

The lad shook his head.

'I have climbed the Vicarage elms Mr. Rees, and this sail is nothing compared with them.'

And the boy went climbing hand over hand up the sails. Reaching the hub he rested there a moment and called down,

'She needs oil, Mr. Rees, getting dry of grease she is.'

After that the lad climbed on.

Some old strut, perhaps, rotten from the rain and wind of the winters. Or perhaps the boy was too anxious and eager to show his speed and skill.

Came a creak, a sudden tearing of wood and cloth and the boy fell with a great limb-waving movement to the soft, wet ground at the base of the windmill. A moment afterwards a little dust floated down and the sails turned a half circle; the bees rose then and flew away east into England.

Rees picked up the boy. The police came and the ambulance and the people from the village. The lad was not dead. But as the boy was carried away from the mill, people looked back sometimes at Rees. He who stood now at the door of his house holding in his hand the box which had fallen from the sail; the box which Robert had carried to that height.

The boy's brain was touched in the place that recorded time and the passing of the years; so that sometimes he was a child in his ways and at other times talked in the definite, fixed way of the old. He had to be taken to some quiet Home. Perhaps it was better that it should be like that than he should be crippled and live on in the village as a reminder.

Rees changed, too. It was said that he locked the door at the top of the mill steps and allowed the machinery and the sails to revolve just as long as they may. With the winter the generator stopped, the bearings burning away for lack of oil; and with the high winds the sails broke loose and whipped away into tatters and broken pieces. And with the same gale, the greatest in living memory, two of the remaining cherry trees were uprooted.

All this affected Rees the Windmill. He gave away no more electricity and his hives toppled and his bees perished in the same wind which broke the sails and uprooted the cherry trees. Never again did he whitewash his windmill. And the cherries he would neither sell nor give away but left to decay and rot between the banks where the primroses still had root.

The people of Lawnt feel that there is some strangeness behind all this which started with the legacy of the bees. Strange how these which had come from the dead had swarmed on the two joyful things in Rees's life. And how in

the process the windmill and the trees which had given him so much happiness had been destroyed.

Yet they in the village say that there must be an explanation. Perhaps Rees gave more love to his trees and his windmill than he ever gave to this mysterious brother of his. A matter of some hidden right or wrong? But to blacken a man's heart and despair his soul through such wonderful things seems hardly fair. For a man who is blessed with a windmill and twelve cherry trees must suffer proportionate despair when these are taken away from him.

# NOVELS OF INTEREST

Reviewed by HUGH BRADENHAM

---

THE JACARANDA TREE. H. E. BATES. Michael Joseph.  
9s. 6d.

THE MASK OF WISDOM. HOWARD CLEWES. John Lane.  
9s. 6d.

AN AIR THAT KILLS. FRANCIS KING. Home and Van Thal.  
9s. 6d.

MIST ON THE WATERS. F. L. GREEN. Michael Joseph.  
9s. 6d.

A SUMMER TO DECIDE. PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON.  
Michael Joseph. 10s. 6d.

DANCE OF THE APPRENTICES. EDWARD GAITENS.  
William Maclellan. 8s. 6d.

MAN'S ESTATE. ANDRÉ MALRAUX. Translated from the  
French by ALASTAIR MACDONALD. Hogarth Press. 8s. 6d.

CONCLUDING. HENRY GREEN. Hogarth Press. 8s. 6d.

MR. H. E. BATES's new novel describes the flight of a party of English men and women, together with a Burmese brother and sister, from the Japanese invasion. It has very much the air of a novel based on experience, the experience being the mood of a time of crisis and the feel of a country and landscape, with characters and story rather loosely attached to these. And the result of this loose attachment is a continual and slightly bewildering change of focus; a scene is sharply and brilliantly defined, sometimes with an extraordinary vividness, as in a horrifying description of vultures eating bodies in a motor car, and then the viewpoint alters, 'the simple directness of the journey' has become, in Mr. Bates's own phrase, 'intricate with inexplicable motives and disaster,' and the characters viewed from a greater distance become misty and blurred. In a sense, no doubt, this flickering from the sharp to the vague is appropriate to the theme; it is how a crisis and a period of strain arranges itself in the memory. But then this novel does not purport to be arranged in any one memory or mind; it is not told in the first person or even with any single character in

the foreground who can observe other people behaving strangely without having to understand exactly what their motives and emotions are. Mr. Bates is, of course, still exploring and digesting the wholly new themes that the war has given to him; in his novels and short stories of country life he was writing about people with whom he seemed to have grown up and the drawing of his characters had the firmness and assurance that comes with long acquaintance, but now, and with the tourist's inevitable air of uncertainty, he is courageously wandering into the enormous world.

Mr. Howard Clewes, with no study of a settled way of life such as Mr. Bates had made behind him, advances with complete confidence to inspect the disorders of our time. The scene is a country occupied by the well-intentioned and amusingly ineffectual British, and the main event is the cult among the conquered people of a boy, the son of a fallen Fascist leader, who performs two authentic miracles; these are described in minute detail and there can hardly be any doubt, though the blurb seems to suggest that there is, that the author means the miracles to have occurred in actual fact and not in the imagination of any of the characters in the book. Mr. Clewes has, indeed, a very remarkable power of making his narrative sound completely authentic, and perhaps in this one detail his faculty has trapped him into attempting something which, however well it is done, hardly goes with his otherwise completely convincing account of a situation which is, without any introduction of the miraculous, sufficiently strange and sufficiently unlike the themes of more conventional novelists. For the rest it is, certainly a distinguished novel, extremely skilful in the alternation between humour and gravity, a serious theme approached in an adult fashion.

Mr. Francis King, in his third, and latest, novel continues his study of human manners and motives with an account of the relationship between a young man with literary ambitions and a middle-aged Indian civil servant whose career has denied him an outlet for creative work. A less gifted writer than Mr. King would no doubt have used such an obvious contrivance merely as a pretext for a superficial inspection of human hopes and disappointments; but Mr. King's main

preoccupation is still with the contradictions of the human heart. The sense of loneliness which brings his two principal characters together is well described, and in their subsequent friendship there is no false sentiment to obstruct its progress. And for this very reason it is possible to accept as a matter of course the desire of the older man to influence the young writer in whom he has found a kindred spirit and presumably the same talent for writing that he himself once had.

For some time gangsters and blackmailers have had an irresistible fascination for writers of popular fiction, no doubt largely because of the ease with which both their actions and their character can be sketched. But more recently there has been a tendency to attribute to men of violence minds capable of deep reflection. In *Mist on the Waters*, for instance, Mr. F. L. Green constantly interrupts the natural flow of his narrative in order to allow one of his characters, a blackmailer who only just falls short of the extreme ferocity of his accomplice, to indulge in maudlin self-pity. 'I'm sick of his ways. I've had enough. I take the brunt o' things. I gets breakfast. I does everything. And not a decent word out o' him.' And then, to make matters worse, Mr. Green speaks, in equally maudlin strain, for him: 'He dreamed of setting up a home for himself. He would find a decent wee body to take care of him. In imagination his fancy ranged over neighbours, acquaintances, women in bars and little shops. He knew that it was a foolish fancy, for no woman would have him. His character was notorious amidst all who knew him. His numerous partnerships in trade had ended in fiasco and trouble. Everybody knew him as a liar, a cheat, a rogue. Yet he knew that he had virtues, somewhere in the general unworthiness of his character. A few grains of goodness, somewhere in him.' And there are many such comments throughout the book.

No one would deny the right of a novelist to examine the contradictory impulses of wicked men, but in any examination of this kind it is essential that the characters concerned should be observed without any desire to find virtue where none probably exists. In any event, this is primarily a story which depends for its effect on the sense of action; and some of Mr. Green's scenes are exciting enough. The fire in which the

blackmailers, one of them is also a murderer, finally perish is perhaps too near to melodrama for their end to be regarded as an act of retribution. The Irish city in which the story is set is pleasantly enough described.

Readers of Miss Pamela Hansford Johnson's earlier works will no doubt remark upon the change in her recent treatment of character. In the past she invariably drew her characters in the round; they were fairly solid figures, easy to recognize, and true to their surroundings. Now, presumably in order to enlarge her vision, she admits into her company characters so cursorily inspected and so little understood that they seldom emerge as authentic persons. It is a fault common enough in works of everyday fiction, but it is one which can hardly be justified in a novel by so practised a writer as Miss Johnson. Apart from this, there is much in her latest book to admire: the skill, for instance, with which she arranges a whole series of incidents as a background to conversation and comment; her use of a style of writing which permits the introduction of discursive passages without seriously diverting the flow of her narrative; and the precision with which she describes life in a London which is only just beginning to readjust itself after the war.

The scene of this first novel by Mr. Edward Gaitens, *Dance of the Apprentices*, is the Gorbals, a slum district of Glasgow; and, as one might expect from so harsh a background, the story is concerned with the effect of environment on character and the struggle of men and women to free themselves from the squalor of the conditions imposed on them. It is, of course, an excellent subject for a realistic novel, and one which Mr. Gaitens evidently has near to his heart. His description of the material conditions of life in the slums unmistakably bears the impress of a writer equipped with a first-hand knowledge of tenement life, and because of this the atmosphere is entirely authentic. But there are, unfortunately, serious shortcomings in his drawing of character. The outlines are correct but the details seem to have been sketched in with a curious lack of imaginative insight.

M. André Malraux's *La Condition Humaine*, which is now to be had again in the English translation made some years ago

by Mr. Alastair Macdonald, is a work of considerable merit. Although primarily a novel of violence, with the scene set in Shanghai at the time of its seizure in 1927 by the National Revolutionary Army, it is by no means exclusively concerned with physical fore. The agitators let loose amid the horrors of the Communist rising are for the most part men of action; but they are also, the author would seem to suggest, lonely individualists, often separated from the mass of people by the very cause for which they are working; in the end, for these men and for many others, the 'human estate' is at times almost unendurable; afraid of life they seek their own self-destruction. Chen, the terrorist, for example, ends his life by hurling himself with a bomb at the car of General Chiang Kai Shek. But Chen is only one of a dozen men whose characters are so well drawn that they remain firmly impressed on the mind many years after they were first met. The clarification of M. Malraux's philosophy since he first wrote this novel gives a further reading of it an added interest. He is undoubtedly one of the most distinguished writers of to-day.

Even those who are most disposed to appreciate the novels of Mr. Henry Green must occasionally find it difficult to catch his exact meaning. The principal theme is obvious enough, it is the danger of letting the Civil Service attempt to serve civilians. An eminent scientist is given by a grateful government a cottage on the fringe of an estate where women civil servants are trained to acquire their inhuman outlook. The two heads of the training school, two women, need no training, and they are determined to get hold of that cottage. Much of the novel is occupied with an account of their intrigues, and here the mistiness and obscurity of Mr. Green's fantasy begins to intervene. No doubt it is a part of his thesis that civil intrigues are meaningless and inconsequential, but the reader is troubled by the constant flickering of the novel between an admirably clear-headed realism and the hopeless fog which Mr. Green not only suggests, reasonably enough, is engendered by the state officials but which he also allows to infect the very structure of his plot. He is also, of course, a poet rather than a realist and some of the obscurity belongs to a traveller in the particular waste land that his particular

vein of poetry inclines him to cultivate; every possible allowance must be made for such an imagination, except when it is not allowed to be true to itself or to work consistently, except, in fact, when it is rather awkwardly confined by something which purports, for quite long stretches at a time, to be a straightforwardly realistic novel.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

---

### MARLOWE'S FAUSTUS IN A SPECIAL EDITION.

BASIL ASHMORE. Blandford Press. 7s. 6d.

It is a matter merely of academic interest to me whether Marlowe, or his collaborators wrote the clown scenes in Doctor Faustus. Yet reading Mr. Basil Ashmore's special version, which omits them, I am conscious of a loss. I find I have held them in some affection.

Mr. Jack Lindsay in his introduction says: 'It is indeed tragical that the history of Dr. Faustus has come down to us in a bowdlerised, confused, and imperfect text. We know, for instance, that the Elizabethan impressario Henslowe, paid two minor playwrights, Bird and Rowley, £4 for "adicyones in doctor fests". How much alteration can be claimed as theirs, and how much blame be laid on the theatre clowns who added comic scenes, is still debated nowadays. But there is certainly a consensus of scholarly opinion that all we have is the wreck of Marlowe's original drama.'

This penetrating introduction should be read, for it does much to justify and to explain the liberties taken by Mr. Ashmore. 'He has first broken down the play to its fundamentals, and then rebuilt round its structure everything which can be valuably rescued from the two quarters.'

Mr. Ashmore's principle has been that everything in the play that falls below his high standards must have been written by somebody else. I cannot agree. I think the rumbustious and wayward Christopher Marlowe quite capable of writing the comic scenes.

Yet I remember, in the few inadequate performances of the play I have seen or heard, that these scenes tended to disappoint. And it is Basil Ashmore, the man of the theatre, a man of poetic imagination and fire, who gives value to this text.

There are passages in the original quartos that I miss in Mr. Ashmore's text. There are a few passages in his text which I cannot find in either quarto. But I realize that I have experienced Dr. Faustus as written literature, and that all per-

formances fall far short of what I have imagined, so that I returned to the book, to hear the words presented in the far better equipped theatre of the mind.'

For example, I miss from this text the scene of the baiting of the Pope, when the Cardinals sing a *Maledicat Dominus*, 'Cursed be he that stole away his Holiness meat from the table,' etc., which I have always regarded as essential Marlowe. But looking more closely, I find this stage direction:

'A solemn music sounds. Enter the Pope, attended. Several spirits enter dressed as Cardinals and bow low before him. They are blessed by the Pope and prostrate themselves. Suddenly the music changes. The Cardinals' robes are flung aside, and the spirits are shown as fiery devils. They dance wildly round the Pope, and finally drive him off stage. Faustus applauds.'

I realize then that this play belongs to the stage. The man of the theatre has transcended the scholar. This ballet, this spectacle, resting the ear for a moment from the glorious rhetoric, would be far more effective, less susceptible to misrepresentation, than the words in the original quartos, whether they were, or were not, written by Marlowe.

So I would allow this version to stand or fall by a stage production, which I anxiously await. I would admit too, reading it without reference to the original, that as literature it has a shape and sweep that is lost in the mutilated quartos. But it is its restoration to its place of honour in our theatre, a tragic excitement, a wholeness of experience, a play with the greatest dramatic sweep and the grandest dramatic poetry of our language, the possibility of production that gives value to this new book.

To add to that value as a book, Mr. Ashmore has included the chapbook, the 1592 edition, of the 'History of the damnable life and deserved death of Dr. John Faustus', from which Marlowe worked up his play. It is fascinating to see how Marlowe took the rather prolix prose passages from this chapbook almost bodily, melted them down, and raised them to the incandescence of his finest dramatic scenes.

As in the case of *Tamburlaine the Great*, the Blandford Press, with the help and advice of Mr. Ashmore, have given us a very attractive book, well spaced on the page, pleasant, and easy

to read, with, as a frontispiece, an impression of the Doctor after a sketch by Rembrandt. Yet I cannot understand how these editions have received so little publicity. They can be epoch-making. They can give a shot of much needed fire to our theatre.

In a note Mr. Ashmore says, 'As a result of the removal of Non-Marlovian dross from Dr. Faustus I may have laid myself open to the charge of having left the play too short for performance in the theatre. Yet as a practical producer I cannot see any real difficulty. Any producer, by the use of imagination, music, ballet, and magical effects, could make the play into a full evening's entertainment (Swinburne's prologue might be added with advantage).'

That is how he sees the play. An evening's entertainment. Living theatre. A shot of fire in the veins of the stage. The restoration of perhaps our greatest glory.

MAURICE CARPENTER

FIVE POEMS, 1470-1870: An Elementary Essay on the background of English Literature. E. M. W. TILLYARD. Chatto and Windus. 8s. 6d. net.

DR. TILLYARD's little book sets out to analyse five longish poems, each a century distant from the other, in terms of their significance, their handling of the great commonplaces, their cosmic and ethical connotations, and so forth. The five poems chosen, Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*, Davies's *Orchestra*, Dryden's *Anne Killigrew*, *The Ancient Mariner*, and Swinburne's *Hertha* are curious bedmates, but no matter. They serve to make the whole thing what it modestly claims to be, an elementary essay on the background of English literature, and in so far as the essay concerns itself with those elements specified by Dr. Tillyard, it seems to me to be highly competent, though not very exciting. The general reader who uses it wisely will certainly find it a suggestive concomitant to any reasonable anthology of English poetry.

So long as Dr. Tillyard is in fairly familiar country he is an admirable guide, but what happens when he strays into the wilderness beggars all description. Let us consider, for instance, what happens to Coleridge's poem. The chapter is headed

'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, 1798', which is nothing so, because Dr. Tillyard, by referring to Coleridge's prose gloss, indicates that he is really talking about the 1817 version. The distinction is quite an important one, and nobody has any business to put pen to paper on the subject until he has taken the trouble to compare the separate versions. I see no evidence to support the view that the slaying of the albatross is 'the essential act of devilment, the act of pride, of the unbridled assertion of the self. What Satan did when he rebelled, etc.' I find even less support for the assertion that 'The Ancient Mariner and his ship represent the small but persisting class of mental adventurers who are not content with the appearances surrounding them, but who attempt to get behind.' The adventure is spiritual, and the really significant point is that the mariner, far from being a mental adventurer is, in his very simplicity and isolation, at one with Wordsworth's leech-gatherer, and his passive acceptance of a great moral experience is the most important thing about him. Miss Bodkin's notion that the poem is 'a rendering of the pattern of rebirth' does not seem any the less silly because Dr. Tillyard quotes it approvingly, and the claim that 'the haunting terror of the destructive experience remains the dominant theme of the poem' seems to me to be very wide of the mark.

In dealing with the religious feeling in the poem Dr. Tillyard tells us: 'The spirits in *The Ancient Mariner* are akin to Shelley's

Oh! there are spirits of the air  
And genii of the evening breeze,  
And gentle ghosts—

and alien to the precisely ordered spiritual hierarchies of Dionysius the Areopagite' Shelley must have thought so, too, since he addressed these particular lines to Coleridge. The most profound religious strain in the poem, we are told, is that concerning the salvation of a human soul.' This is a preposterous overstatement. There is a world of difference between particular sin and damnation: equally between purgation and salvation.

The dominant theme of *The Ancient Mariner* I take to be precisely this:

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
 All things both great and small ;  
 For the dear God who loveth us,  
 He made and loveth all.

This is the sum total of the mariner's experience and also of Coleridge's. It is the faith in which Coleridge lived and died and the basis of the unimpeachable unity of his poetry.

For the rest, I find Dr. Tillyard's chapters on Davies and Dryden lucid and helpful. That on Henryson deserves consideration, for there are some original judgments, but the whole is rendered suspect by an initial misconception, that Henryson uses a rough language powerfully. The language used by Henryson (and by Dunbar and Douglas) seems to me powerful enough, but there is no roughness in its masculinity. Henryson is, in fact, a peculiarly felicitous poet and his technical proficiency is, perhaps, the most remarkable thing about him.

And Swinburne's *Hertha*, we are told, anticipates the philosophy of Nazism. This view is logical enough if we accept Dr. Tillyard's interpretation of Swinburne, of *Hertha*, and of Nazism, but for my part, I think he has misunderstood all three. There seems to be genuine bewilderment in his treatment of this rather prolix poem, but then, he starts with the assumption that it is a difficult work. He also writes of its thought. Strange things are bound to happen when one searches Swinburne for difficulties and thought, and here the odd consequence is one of those rather vague *-isms* to which Dr. Tillyard seems to be so firmly attached.

I leave this book with mixed feelings and a backward glance at poor Gauleiter Swinburne, ill-used alike by admirers and detractors. The thing was worth doing, but I feel that it was worth doing better.

J. M. NOSWORTHY

LADY ANNE BARNARD. MADELEINE MASSON. Allen and Unwin. 18s. net.

In this age of literary austerity, when such writing as we are offered usually consists of Mr. Jones on Mr. Brown, or Miss

Smith on Mrs. Robinson, it comes as a welcome change to find any subject which has not already been dealt with a hundred times before. Madeleine Masson has discovered such a subject in Lady Anne Barnard, an intelligent and humorous Scots-woman, who wrote the ballad 'Auld Robin Gray'. She was the eldest daughter of the Earl of Balcarres, born in the middle of the eighteenth century; after a Spartan childhood and several visits to Edinburgh she came to London to live with her beautiful married sister, Margaret. Lady Anne Lindsay herself, owing to a prolonged unrequited love affair, remained single until she was well over forty, and finally married Andrew Barnard, a young man not much more than half her age. Her influence with the Home Secretary Dundas, one of her former admirers, eventually procured for him the post of Colonial Secretary in South Africa, after the Cape of Good Hope had been taken by British Naval Forces; and there she spent five years of her life during the turn of the century. Madeleine Masson has done original research work on documents and letters of the period, and throws new and most interesting light on the early days of the Colony. It happened that the Governor, Lord Macartney, did not bring out his wife with him, so that Lady Anne was officially the first lady in the land, a position not without its difficulties: the Dutch were displeased at coming under British administration, slavery prevailed, and the provincial pattern of life must have seemed boring enough to a woman accustomed to the glamour of London Society, one who knew everybody from Mrs. Fitzherbert to Sheridan and Sir Joshua Reynolds, and who for her diversion was wont to take the waters at Bath or to dance with the Prince Regent at Brighton. But Lady Anne fortunately was interested in everything: she wrote long letters, she made sketches. Determined to win over the Dutch, she gave brilliant parties which the women, at any rate, were delighted to attend. 'The mothers and daughters always came,' she once wrote, 'and to plough with the heifers has always been reckoned a good mode of improving a reluctant soil.' In order to climb Table Mountain she did not hesitate to put on her husband's trousers; convention troubled her no more in late middle age than it had troubled her years before, when she had

eked out her income by letting houses which she had first furnished in 'tasty' fashion.

Lady Anne's vivid personality and the historical background combine to make this a book of unusual interest. One could wish that there were fewer imagined thoughts and invented conversations, and that the proof-correcting had been done with more attention: p. 246 is a particularly bad example of carelessness. But these are small matters, and anybody who acquires this book may be assured that it is vastly entertaining reading.

D. L. HOBMAN

THREE SEASONS AND OTHER STORIES. Translated from the Chinese by CHUN-CHAN YEH. Staples Press Limited. 6s.

THEY FLY SOUTH. CHUN-CHAN YEH. Sylvan Press. 9s. 6d. RUNNING through the seven tales Mr. Yeh has translated and brought together in 'Three Seasons and Other Stories' is a single unifying theme: the life of Chinese peasants shortly before and during the war. In *Spring Silkworms*, *Autumn Harvest* and *Winter Fantasies*, Mao Tun dramatizes the struggle for existence in a Chinese village whose market for cocoons had vanished owing to the closing down of the silk factories in a nearby town after the Japanese invasion of Shanghai. Intermingled with a sober concern for the 'living social realities' is a conflict of ideas. Toto, the young 'unfilial' son of Old Tungpao, is vindicated by the turn of events; but until he lies breathing his last (looking at his son, his 'mortal enemy', with eyes that seemed to say, 'I never believed you were right . . . how strange!') it's the old peasant with his stubbornness, his sharp tongue, his hallucinations about the long-haired peasant rebels of 1850, his pride in his ancestral ties of friendship with the family of the rich 'Lord' Chen and his suspicion and hatred of everything foreign who dominates the glowing, many-sided sequence.

Two of the stories—the affinity between them is close—are in light vein: Yao Hsueh-yin's *Half a Cartload of Straw Short* and S.M.'s *The Third-Rate Gunner* (a sensational success in China.) Essentially studies of country bumpkins in uniform,

the humour in both flows along gently and never descends to slapstick or the grotesque as it might easily have done. The building of a highway across the border into Burma at a critical moment in China's struggle with Japan provides Pai Ping-Chei with the background for a vivid sketch, *Along the Yunnan-Burma Road*, of the coolies engaged in the task. In *Mr. Hua Wei*, Chang T'ien-yi draws with sharpness and biting satire a portrait of a 'professional leader of the masses.' It is Mr. Wei's ambition, as he speeds in his rickshaw from meeting to meeting, to give 'every organized endeavour of a patriotic people the benefit of his "direction and guidance." He obviously derives from a predilection on the part of Chang T'ien-yi to choose the characters in his stories from among 'friends, relatives, and those with whom I have had frequent contact; but as Harold Acton observes in an essay on *Small Talk in China* which forms an appendix to the book, Mr. Wei with his opportunism and cant is not merely a Chinese phenomenon. He is a universal type.'

The author of three volumes of stories in Chinese and a translator who, besides his translations into English, has translated various European authors into Chinese, Mr. Yeh has also done a considerable amount of creative writing in English. His first novel, *The Mountain Village*, was a Book Society Choice in 1947. In *They Fly South* he breaks new, virgin ground—far from the struggles between tenant farmers and landlords, the impulse of revolution and counter-revolution, the grapevines and the wine ('the delicate, gold-coloured product of civilization'), the sugar cane and the barley, the millet and the white rice and the use of chopsticks down on the plains.

His milieu is that of the Miao, an aboriginal folk dwelling in the mountains of South West China. The soil which the Miao till is stony and produces only meagre crops—maize and rape, the oil from the seed of which forms 'the chief ingredient' in their diet. They have 'no religion . . . no gods.' A fanciful folk, given to day-dreaming and the improvising of songs on the spur of the moment, the Miao 'especially the ambitious ones, would indulge in fantastic illusions about the big world outside when their minds became old enough to be agitated

*June Selections.*

**Victorian Best-Seller**

One of the best reviewed books of 1948, this account of the life and times of Charlotte M. Yonge has been widely commended for its treatment and detail. *Reprint. A study of an epoch, illustrated by the life of one of its most celebrated figures and by her work* — *Continental Daily Mail. Illustrated. 15s. net*

*Margaret Mare & Alicia Percival*

---

**The Skeptical Gardener**

This new re-set edition of *The Skeptical Gardener* has been prepared for HARRAP'S COUNTRY-LOVER'S LIBRARY of proven and successful works on the countryside and kindred subjects. No changes have been made in the text and there is a completely new set of decorations by Astrid Walford. 10s. 6d. net

*Humphrey Denham*

---

**The Holborn Library**

CHAPTERS I-V OF MACAULAY'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND form the latest addition to the HOLBORN LIBRARY of the Classics, volumes of which have won high commendation in literary circles. In the same series we have recently published JAMES MORIER'S HAJJI BABA OF ISPANAH AND DAVID COPPERFIELD. The volumes are attractively designed and artistically produced and except where the contrary is specifically stated they contain the complete, unabridged text of the original. *Series price is 6s. net.*

**HARRAP**

by the desire for knowledge and by the universal human frailty—vanity.'

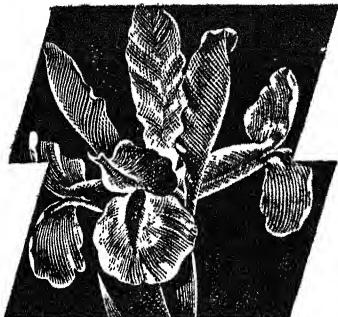
At the age of nineteen the desire to follow in the finest Miao tradition was kindled in Ching Lung, the grandson of Marigold, the old wise woman of the story. He went out and killed a wolf and at the Spring Dance he secured a partner, Plum Blossom. He was now ready for the big plunge—to venture beyond the mountains to the Great Wall and the Sea. He wanted to do this not only to satisfy a yearning within himself and to prove that he had really come of age, but out of his devotion to Marigold, all of whose hopes, dreams, and ambitions were centred upon him. The old woman was so wise—why, when she saw geese traversing the sky, flying south, she immediately knew that autumn was on the way! Descending to the plains, Ching Lung with his feeling of racial separateness was not happy among the Chinese. ('It's a pity you can't read characters', an old ferryman told him. "Chinese" means a way of life, a civilization. It no longer represents a race, because there is no such thing.') He grew home-sick and, as the geese began to fly south again, he abandoned his journey and returned to Marigold and Plum Blossom.

In an Author's Note, Mr. Yeh explains that *They Fly South* is a work of fiction, and it is an exquisite one; but 'readers with anthropological interest are warned that all the incidents and the circumstances in which they take place are purely imaginary.'

ERIC WALROND

THE OLD AND THE YOUNG. MARGIAD EVANS. Lindsay Drummond. 8s. 6d.

SENSITIVITY grows in lonely places, and Miss Evans's themes are those of apartness. She writes of an old woman who lives on a hilltop and wrestles with the wind, about a very small child who can only grow downwards, and the superannuated clergyman who flew into a rage if his whisky was served to him from a bottle instead of a jar, and about the monster who cohabited with a loved one long after love had died (a terrible story of the traitor-heart which just happens to have a lesbian form). Her people, then, are cut off from the external erosion



*Early  
Morning  
Freshness*

*Euthymol*  
TOOTHPASTE

FROM ALL CHEMISTS

A PARKE-DAVIS PRODUCT

HEFFER

OF CAMBRIDGE

for BOOKS on  
ALL SUBJECTS

English and Foreign  
New and Secondhand

Catalogues issued

Buyers of Fine, Rare,  
and Scholarly Books

*The Bookshop  
known the world over*

W. HEFFER & SONS, LTD.,  
PETTY CURY

CAMBRIDGE

★ *Rheumatic Sufferer  
reports AMAZING  
RELIEF*  
  
after only ten  
days' treatment  
with Beltona

"After months of  
torturing pain, the relief has been  
amazing after using your BELTONA  
Lotion for only 10 days. I could not  
lift my arm or draw my breath without  
the most agonising pain. I shall  
do all I can to make BELTONA  
known. Mrs. E.N. (unsolicited testimonial)

Invaluable in cases of  
Sprains Strains  
Rheumatism  
Neuritis  
Lumbago  
Fibrosis  
Sciatica, etc.

BELTONA  
LOTION

From Chemists 2/9½d, 4/0½d, 6/6½d. (inc. P.T.)

of communal circumstance—they are driven into a life of prophecy. Their only companions are the impossible ones of isolation—the unseen mice in the cupboards and the crackles and creaks of midnights and dawns. So the child profoundly asks the imbecile invalid, 'Do you wish you were the only person in the world?' or remarks that a white chrysanthemum ought to be on a grave, 'A lovely big grave.'

This private intensify is very Welsh; and such a path of sorcery leads back to the beginning of things, when every word and gesture has a saturated meaning of symbol and promise. Happiness (as one of Miss Evans's characters remarks) is too small a thing to contain this world. Here are no pumpkin ghosts but myths which may well leave the reader who responds looking as if he has 'eaten white eggs' . . . Well, it was Dylan Thomas who always used to assure us that all Welshmen are wizards. Not, indeed, that all Miss Evans's stories are keyed to this pitch; but the best ones are, and it is a remarkable achievement.

Those who have known and appreciated Miss Evans's work in the past will be particularly interested in the drawings and decorations which the author has contributed to the volume. They are an enrichment for stories which will haunt at least one borderland.

OSWELL BLAKESTON

BRITISH PAMPHLETEERS. Volume 1. Edited by GEORGE ORWELL and REGINALD REYNOLDS. Allan Wingate. 16s.

THIS collection might more properly have been entitled *British Political Pamphleteers*, since it is confined entirely to the political and politico-religious products. The publishers' blurb refers ambiguously to the republication of twenty-five pamphlets, whereas a half-dozen or so are given in full, and the rest in extract.

Mr. George Orwell writes a characteristically forceful introduction, in which he defines the proper functions of the political pamphlet, compares past and present examples, and wistfully deplores the decline of the art. He suggests some of the reasons for the decline, and altogether stimulates enthusiasm for this fascinating byway of literature. He might

On the Beautiful South Coast of Jamaica

## Treasure Beach Hotel

Treasure Beach, Frenchman's Bay, Jamaica, B.W.I.

90 miles from Kingston, a modern Hotel  
in unspoilt tropical surroundings.

• Half a mile of Palm-Fringed Beach.

Cottage with Tiled Bathrooms and  
Private Verandahs.

• The Best Cooking in Jamaica.

**Rates, 30s. to £3 a day, including meals.**

Car meets at Airport of either Kingston or Montego Bay.

Temperature from 68° to 80° F., winter usually 70°.

*Full information from E. Hamilton Dicker, manager.*

### SUBSCRIPTION FORM

## LIFE AND LETTERS

Continuing THE LONDON MERCURY

430 STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2.

TEMPLE BAR 7697

Name . . . . . Address . . . . .

I enclose 20/- subscription to "Life and Letters" for one year post free

Signature . . . . . Date . . . . .

have mentioned the true descendant of the old pamphleteers, Mr. Bernard Shaw, whose plays and prefaces, though obtainable in volume form, were published separately and cheaply, and in effect as pamphlets—and what pamphlets!

From the enormous output of pamphlet literature in this country, Mr. Reynolds is content to quote twenty-five only from the Reformation to the French Revolution; the second volume will cover the century and a half from the Revolution to the present day. It seems disproportionate, and does not allow a fair showing, for the earlier and greater period of pamphleteering. It is unfortunate that the present collection is confined to political work only, for its cuts off the riches, among others, of Dekker's magnificent plague pamphlets and of the great witch controversy of the seventeenth century. The pamphlet has been unduly ignored: it is invaluable for the contemporary view on the political, social, religious, and other aspects of history. Mr. Reynolds has missed an opportunity; a fuller representation of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, say in two volumes, and the longer extract, or better still the full pamphlet, would have served the student better. This collection does not compare well with A. C. Ward's excellent *Miscellany of Tracts and Pamphlets*, in which some twenty pieces are given in full, nor with the collections of sixteenth and seventeenth century tracts in the revised edition of Arber's *English Garner*. However, we must be grateful to Mr. Reynolds for reprinting some material that has not appeared since first publication. He has, moreover, provided useful notes (strongly radical in flavour) and appears to be abreast of modern scholarship, except in one or two cases. For instance, he regards Charles I's authorship of *Eikon Basilike* as generally accepted, whereas nearly all scholars now regard it as probably the work of John Gauden (1605-62). We regret that the publishers have sanctioned the detestable practice of printing the introduction and notes in italic type, and thus making the reading of them a sore trial for the eyes. Otherwise it is a reasonably well-produced book.

JOHN FREEMAN

# LIFE AND LETTERS

*continuing The London Mercury under the Editorship of  
Robert Herring*

---

*A few copies of the following special issues remain*

**IRISH Writers** — April, 1949

**CHINESE Writers** — January, 1949

**INDIAN Writers** — December, 1948

*Orders are now being accepted for the forthcoming*

**ITALIAN Writers** — August, 1949

**SWEDISH Writers** — October, 1949

**PERSIAN Writers** — December, 1949

*Provisionally planned for 1950 —*

**CANADA, HAITI, ECUADOR**

From all Booksellers and Newsagents or direct from BRENDIN  
PUBLISHING Company, Ltd., 430 Strand, London, W.C. 2.

---

Printed in Great Britain by Stephen Austin & Sons, Ltd., 1 Fore Street,  
Hertford, England; published by The Brendin Publishing Co., Ltd.,  
Registered Offices, 430 Strand, London, W.C.2; Sole Agents for Australia  
and New Zealand, Messrs Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., and for South Africa,  
Central News Agency, Ltd.